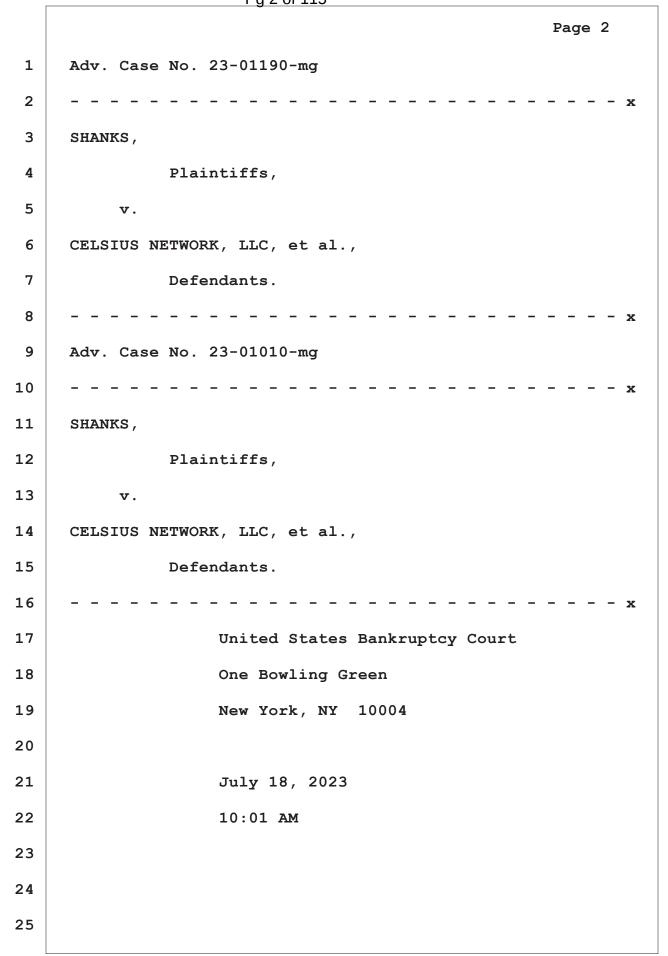
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| 1 | UNITED STATES BANKRUPTCY COURT |
| 2 | SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK |
| 3 | Case No. 22-10964-mg |
| 4 | Adv. Case No. 23-01007-mg |
| 5 | x |
| 6 | In the Matter of: |
| 7 | |
| 8 | CELSIUS NETWORK LLC, |
| 9 | |
| 10 | Debtor. |
| 11 | x |
| 12 | AD HOC GROUP OF BORROWERS, |
| 13 | Plaintiffs, |
| 14 | ${f v}$. |
| 15 | CELSIUS NETWORK, LLC, et al., |
| 16 | Defendants. |
| 17 | x |
| 18 | Adv. Case No. 23-01016-mg |
| 19 | x |
| 20 | GEORGIOU, et al., |
| 21 | Plaintiffs, |
| 22 | ${f v}$. |
| 23 | CELSIUS NETWORK, LLC, et al., |
| 24 | Defendants. |
| 25 | x |



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Page 3
    B E F O R E :
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     HON MARTIN GLENN
     U.S. BANKRUPTCY JUDGE
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     ECRO: F. FERGUSON
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Page 4 1 HEARING re Second Interim Fee Application of M3 Advisory 2 Partners, LP for Compensation for Services Rendered and 3 Reimbursement of Expenses as Financial Advisor to the Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors for the period of 4 5 November 1, 2022 through February 28, 2023 (Doc #2459, 2980) 6 7 HEARING re Second Application for Interim Professional 8 Compensation for Ernst & Young LLP, Other Professional, 9 period: 11/1/2022 to 2/28/2023, fee: \$417,855.00, 10 expenses: \$0.00 (Doc #2455, 2980) 11 12 HEARING re First Interim Fee Application of Gornitzky & Co. 13 for Compensation for Services Rendered and Reimbursement of 14 Expenses as Israeli Counsel to the Official Committee of 15 Unsecured Creditors for the period of November 2, 2022 16 through February 28, 2023 (Doc #2514, 2980) 17 18 HEARING re Second Interim Fee Application of Huron 19 Consulting Services LLC as Financial Advisor to Examiner for the Period from November 1, 2022 through and including 20 21 February 28, 2023 for Huron Consulting Services LLC, Other 22 Professional, period: 11/1/2022 to 2/28/2023, Fee: \$3,386,594.00, expenses: \$0.00 (Doc #2465, 2980) 23 24 25

Page 5 1 HEARING re Second Interim Application of Elementus Inc. for 2 Compensation for Services Rendered and Reimbursement of Expenses as Blockchain Forensics Advisor to the Official 3 Committee of Unsecured Creditors of Celsius Network, LLC, et 4 5 al., for the period from November 1, 2022 through February 6 28, 2023 filed by Elementus Inc. (Doc #2464, 2980) 7 8 HEARING re Second Application for Interim Professional 9 Compensation of White & Case LLP for Compensation for 10 Services Rendered and Reimbursement of Expenses as Counsel 11 to the Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors from 12 November 1, 2022 through February 28, 2023 (Doc #2457, 2980) 13 14 HEARING re Second Application for Interim Professional 15 Compensation for Centerview Partners LLC, Other 16 Professional, period: 11/1/2022 to 2/28/2023, Fee: 17 \$2,000,000.00, expenses: \$2,195.04 (Doc 2466, 2980) 18 19 HEARING re First Application for Interim Professional 20 Compensation for Ernst & Young LLP, Other Professional, 21 period: 7/13/2022 to 10/31/2022, fee:\$778,680.00, expenses: 22 \$0.00. (Doc# 2170, 2980, 3020) 23 24 25

Page 6 1 HEARING re Second Interim Application of Shoba Pillay, 2 Examiner and Jenner & Block LLP for Compensation for Professional Services Rendered and Reimbursement of Expenses 3 Incurred as Attorneys for Examiner for the Period of 4 November 1, 2022 Through March 31, 2023 for Jenner & Block 5 6 LLP, Special Counsel, period: 11/1/2022 to 3/31/2023, 7 fee:\$9,534,819.50, expenses: \$66,595.09. (Doc #2463, 2980) 8 9 HEARING re First Interim Application of A.M. Saccullo Legal, 10 LLC Compensation for Services and Reimbursement of Expenses 11 Incurred as Special Counsel to the Debtors for the Period from December 1, 2022 Through February 28, 2023 for A.M. 12 Saccullo Legal, LLC, period: 12/1/2022 to 2/28/2023, 13 fee:\$63,845.00, expenses: \$0.00. (Doc # 2462, 2980) 14 15 16 HEARING re First Application for Interim Professional 17 Compensation of Selendy Gay Elsberg PLLC for Services Rendered and Reimbursement of Expenses as Co-Counsel to the 18 19 Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors for the Period of 20 January 8, 2023, through February 28, 2023. (Doc# 2452, 21 2980) 22 23 24 25

Page 7 1 HEARING re Second Interim Fee Application of Perella 2 Weinberg Partners LP for Compensation for Services Rendered 3 and Reimbursement of Expenses as Investment Banker to the Official Committee of Unsecured Creditors of Celsius 4 5 Network, LLC, et al., for the period of November 1, 2022 6 through February 28, 2023 for Perella Weinberg Partners LP, 7 Other Professional, period: 11/1/2022 to 2/28/2023, 8 fee:\$400,000, expenses: \$76,270.73. (Doc# 2456, 2980) 9 10 HEARING re Second Interim Fee Application of Akin Gump 11 Strauss Hauer & Feld LLP as Special Litigation Counsel to 12 the Debtors and Debtors in Possession for Allowance of 13 Compensation for Services Rendered and Reimbursement of 14 Expenses for the Period November 1, 2022 through and 15 Including February 28, 2023 for Akin Gump Strauss Hauer & 16 Feld LLP, Special Counsel, period: 11/1/2022 to 2/28/2023, 17 fee:\$4,884,132.60, expenses: \$61,571.97. (Doc# 2446, 2980) 18 19 Hybrid Hearing RE: Second Application for Interim 20 Professional Compensation for Alvarez & Marsal North 21 America, LLC, Other Professional, period: 11/1/2022 to 22 2/28/2023, fee:\$7,194,758.50, expenses: \$17,746.65. (Doc 23 #2437, 2980) 24 25

Page 8 1 HEARING re Status Conference Using Zoom for Government RE: 2 Regarding Bar Date and Class Certification Motion (Doc## 3 3032, 1846, 2670, 2899, 2795) 4 5 HEARING re Adversary proceeding: 23-01010-mg Ad Hoc Group of 6 Borrowers v. Celsius Network LLC et al 7 Status Conference. (Doc #6) 8 9 HEARING re Adversary proceeding: 23-01010-mg Georgiou et al 10 v. Celsius Network LLC et al 11 Hybrid Status Conference RE: Motion to Dismiss. (Doc## 1 to 4, 6 to 8, 10, 16) 12 13 14 HEARING re Adversary proceeding: 23-01010-mg Shanks v. 15 Celsius Network LLC, ET AL et al 16 Hybrid Status Conference RE: Debtor's Motion to Dismiss the 17 Second Amended Complaint. (Doc## 17 to 22, 27 to 32) 18 19 HEARING re Adversary proceeding: 23-01010-mg Shanks v. 20 Celsius Network LLC, ET AL et al 21 Status Conference. 22 23 24 25

Page 9 1 HEARING re Adversary proceeding: 23-01010-mg Shanks v. 2 Celsius Network LLC et al 3 Hybrid Conference RE: Motion to Dismiss. (Doc## 1, 3 to 8, 12, 13, 15) 4 5 6 HEARING re Joint Motion for Entry of an Order (I) Approving 7 the Settlement by and Among the Debtors, the Committee, and 8 the Initial Consenting Series B Preferred Holders and (II) 9 Granting Related Relief. (Doc## 2899,2967,2998,3002,3013) 10 11 HEARING re Debtors Motion for Entry of an Order (I) 12 Authorizing and Approving Certain Fees and Expenses for the 13 Backup Plan Sponsor, and (m Granting Related Relief. (Doc## 2978, 2979, 2982 to 2984) 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 Transcribed by: Sonya Ledanski Hyde

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| 12 | ROBERT M. KAUFMANN | |
| 13 | RAKESH PATEL | |
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| 21 | RYAN VOLLENHALS | |
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| 23 | CAROLINE WARREN | |
| 2 4 | TAK YEUNG | |
| 25 | DON SMITH | |
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| | | Page 21 |
| 1 | ALEX SHLIVKO | |
| 2 | NICHOLAS SABATINO | |
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| 2 | JEFF PATTON | |
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Page 27 1 PROCEEDINGS 2 THE COURT: Please be seated. Just give me a 3 moment. 4 MR. KOENIG: Good morning, Your Honor, Chris 5 Koenig --6 THE COURT: Just give me a moment. Okay, Mr. 7 Koenig. 8 MR. KOENIG: Good morning, Your Honor. Chris 9 Koenig, Kirkland & Ellis, for the Celsius Debtors. Your 10 Honor, I know that there was quite a bit of news outside of 11 these Chapter 11 cases --12 THE COURT: Oh, really? 13 MR. KOENIG: -- last week probably of interest to 14 the parties and likely to Your Honor as well, so with your 15 indulgence, I'd like to cover a few of those topics before 16 we get into the amended agenda that we filed last night. 17 THE COURT: Sure. MR. KOENIG: So first, Mr. Mashinsky was indicted 18 19 last week by the Department of Justice, charged with 20 securities fraud, commodities fraud, and wire fraud. 21 SEC, CFTC, and FTC also charged Mr. Mashinsky in separate 22 civil complaints. Each of those regulatory agencies announced consensual agreements with Celsius as corporate 23 24 defendants. Of course, Mr. Mashinsky has not had any role 25 with the Debtors since last fall when the Special Committee

instructed Mr. Mashinsky that he could either resign or he would be terminated and elected to resign.

One of the principal directives from the Special Committee throughout these cases is to fully comply with all investigations. That's exactly what we did here. We fully cooperated with the investigations by the government in Celsius' business model and historical practices. We turned over thousands of documents, provided interviews, and assisted in their investigations, and as a result were pleased to be able to reach resolutions with the DOJ, SEC, FTC, and CFTC, which we think will help us with our Chapter 11 plan and exit from bankruptcy.

of course, given the allegations that have been made, it was totally possible that the regulators could have come into the case, tried to seize the company's assets, or levy huge fines or penalties that would have diluted or even eliminated recoveries for account holders. But that's not what happened here.

Celsius worked cooperatively with these agencies and made clear our view that the account holders are the victims of the crimes here and that we have a process well under way to compensate the victims through these Chapter 11 cases. As a result, the agreements that we've reached do not include claims, fines, or penalties that are likely to dilute the claims pool. Specifically, we've agreed to enter

Page 29 1 into consent orders with the SEC and the CFTC and we've 2 entered into a stipulated order with the FTC. These orders 3 fully resolve the litigation against the Celsius --THE COURT: Let me ask you, all right. Have those 4 5 orders been final -- has the agreement with the SEC been 6 finalized? 7 MR. KOENIG: I believe it's been entered. I don't 8 know whether it's been --9 THE COURT: Because I -- you know, I've got the 10 indictment. I got the SEC complaint. I got the CFTC 11 complain. I don't think I found the FTC. 12 MR. KOENIG: The consent orders have been signed 13 by the company. I don't know, as a procedural matter, 14 whether the applicable Court has answered them or approved 15 them, but they've been signed by the company. 16 THE COURT: Okay. 17 MR. KOENIG: And agreed to by the company. 18 THE COURT: As soon as they -- are they publicly 19 filed in any of the dockets? 20 MR. KOENIG: I don't believe that they're publicly 21 filed. 22 THE COURT: Because I didn't find them. 23 MR. KOENIG: I don't believe that they're publicly 24 filed yet, Your Honor. 25 THE COURT: And here -- well, go ahead and finish,

then I'll ask my questions.

MR. KOENIG: No problem, Your Honor. So none of these agreement are expected to have any material effect in these Chapter 11 cases. Distributions to creditors, our timeline for the Newco's business model.

THE COURT: Well, I think they require amending the disclosure statement.

MR. KOENIG: We totally agree, of course, Your
Honor, that that's going to need to be fully disclosed, and
to be clear, the agreement with the FTC includes a \$4.7
billion suspended judgment. We've seen a lot of confusion
in social media about what that means. Does that increase
customer recoveries? Does that dilute customer recoveries?

THE COURT: Shouldn't affect --

MR. KOENIG: The word suspended is very important.

THE COURT: I understand. That I understand.

MR. KOENIG: We just want to make sure all the parties understand. It's suspended and we don't believe that it will ever be unsuspended. The only way in which the suspended judgment could spring into existence against the Debtors is if these Chapter 11 cases are dismissed without being fully administered in accordance with the rules of the Bankruptcy Code. Of course, we don't expect -- that's exactly what we're doing here is complying with the Bankruptcy Code.

So we don't expect that that suspended judgment will have any effect on cases -- on these cases or distributions to creditors or the like. And again, these agreements with the regulators relate to the historical business practices of Celsius, which of course Celsius has not been engaged in certainly since the petition date in which the Newco under the plan will not be continuing those business practices, either.

These agreements that we've entered into with the regulators require Celsius to follow the law and not engage in a variety of illegal activity relating to its historical business model. So I'll pause there and whatever questions Your Honor has.

THE COURT: Well, so it was a week chock filled with developments, not only in Celsius, but the Court also notes the Ripple decision in the District Court, which of course is not binding on this Court, but I guess one question I have is why -- in particular I'm interested in whatever the resolution is between the company and the SEC.

The SEC complaint alleges both that the cell token is a security and it also alleges that the Earn accounts were securities under Howey test. And so at the last hearing, one of the issues that was discussed was a pro se creditor's motion to value the CEL token. The Committee and the Debtor joined it, an objection that the CEL token was a

Page 32 1 security in that 510(b) of the Bankruptcy Code would require 2 subordination of the claim. I put off that issue. 3 thought it was, still think it was premature but has -- in its settlement with the SEC, has the Debtor agreed that the 4 5 Earn accounts were unregistered securities? 6 MR. KOENIG: Your Honor, we stipulated to certain 7 facts. We didn't agree that -- I don't believe that we 8 agreed -- the legal conclusion --9 THE COURT: What facts did you stipulate to with 10 respect to the Earn accounts? 11 MR. KOENIG: I think that there are facts that 12 could reasonably lead a fact finder to determine that CEL 13 token and Earn were securities. 14 THE COURT: Will -- are you able to say at this 15 point, will the Debtor contest in connection with 16 confirmation that the Earn program was an unregistered 17 security? MR. KOENIG: I think, Your Honor, I recognize I'm 18 19 going to adopt the question a little bit --20 THE COURT: That's okay. It's all news for --21 MR. KOENIG: Right. But for purposes of the plan, 22 what matters is not whether it is an unregistered security, but whether it's a security subject to -- whether the claims 23 24 associated with Earn account are subject to subordination 25 pursuant to Section 510(b), and we don't believe that the

Earn accounts are subject to subordination pursuant to Section 510(b).

THE COURT: And what about with respect to CEL tokens?

MR. KOENIG: I think that -- we've proposed a settlement of those issues and to allow the CEL token at 20 cents in settlement of those issues, that it could be 81 cents if it isn't a security subject to subordination under 510(b), or it could be zero. We've proposed a middle ground and we've been engaged in discussions with -- along with the Committee with the CEL token holders to see if we can reach a more consensual resolution of that issue. That's how we propose to deal with it under the plan, is under the 9019 settlement standard.

THE COURT: And I think I even commented at the last hearing that certainly this issue -- I asked a series of questions if the CEL token is a security and if five -- therefore subordinated under 510(b). It might entitle the holders to zero. What the plan construct was to pay at 20 cents. I guess that was the initial offering price.

MR. KOENIG: That's right.

THE COURT: And I guess we'll see. I don't know how the disclosure statement is dealing with this issue. If it's -- you know, if it's not a -- subject to subordination under -- if the Court had to decide the issue and it was not

Pg 34 of 115 Page 34 subject to subordination under 510(b), there would then be a valuation issue. And I guess that the Committee, perhaps the Debtors' argument would be that the 80 cents price at the petition date was a result of market manipulation. MR. KOENIG: As set forth in the examiner's report. THE COURT: And the examiner's report included a chart which it took right from the Debtor which showed the insider transactions and the market movement in that period leading up to the 80 cents (indiscernible) in the last few days. So I'm just -- I didn't go back. What's in -- what's the disclosure statement say about this issue? MR. KOENIG: It lays out the arguments, pro and con, on this whether CEO should be 81, whether CEL should be zero, the fact that we've -- that we're proposing to settle it at 20 cents. THE COURT: But does it discuss the 510(b) subordination issue? MR. KOENIG: I think it's going to be amended to discuss it a little bit more, Your Honor. THE COURT: Okay. All right. And what if any effect do you believe the Ripple decision has -- and again, it's not binding on this Court. I've read it. What if any

impact do you believe it has or may have on the proposed

plan or confirmation in this case?

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Page 35 1 MR. KOENIG: Your Honor, obviously, it's fresh 2 news for all of us -- I'll put a disclaimer at the front of it -- but we don't think it has any effect outside of 3 potentially the CEL token issue, does this ruling affect the 4 5 way that the Court would look at the CEL token subordination issue under Section 510 of the -- 510(b) of the Bankruptcy 7 Code. It's a complicated decision of the District Court's 8 decision. 9 THE COURT: It is. 10 MR. KOENIG: XRP is --11 THE COURT: Got a lot of commentary on it now and 12 13 MR. KOENIG: And it a security for certain sales 14 but not a security for other transactions. 15 THE COURT: That was a lot to me, but --16 MR. KOENIG: And so I think it would be -- I don't 17 know if Your Honor would adopt that or not --THE COURT: I have no idea. 18 19 MR. KOENIG: -- at confirmation. We're not there. 20 I think that that --21 THE COURT: I'm just more interested in whether, 22 is this likely to be an issue that the Court is going to 23 have to decide? MR. KOENIG: I think the CEL token subordination 24 25 issue is the only area where I think it would come up.

Newco is not engaged in any securities offerings, is not engaged in any of Celsius' historic business practices.

Their new business plan is going to involve Bitcoin mining and staking of Ethereum and other cryptocurrencies. So I don't think it's going to affect the go-forward plan. It may be relevant to the subordination issue under 510(b) for CEL token and perhaps the Earn accounts if somebody makes that argument, which we don't believe is a viable argument, but certainly everybody has their litigation position.

But the last thing I wanted to cover is in the indictment from the DOJ, Mr. Roni Cohen-Pavon, the Debtors' chief revenue officer, was indicted. We learned about that indictment at the same time everybody else did, when the indictment was unsealed and distributed to the world. Upon learning about the indictment, the Special Committee immediately met, immediately authorized the termination of Mr. Cohen-Pavon.

That termination process remains ongoing because under Israeli law, there has to be a hearing in Israel before he can be formally terminated. That said, he is on administrative leave. All of his access to the company's systems, data, email, his internal authority were all immediately cut off by the Special Committee. And even prior to this process, Mr. Cohen-Pavon did not have significant authority with respect to the Debtors' day-to-

day operations.

He had historical information that was useful for internal investigations, but he was not a day-to-day critical officer of the company, but again, to be clear, he has no ongoing authority with the company and he is expected to be terminated in short order.

THE COURT: Okay. Obviously, the company has been in active dialogue with the federal regulators and the DOJ. That leaves the potential issues with the state regulators. For quite some time, I've been urging the Debtor, I guess the Committee as well, to be in dialogue with the state regulators. I think that -- I think you all want to avoid any unnecessary surprises once either disclosure statement comes on for hearing or confirmation hearing, you know.

I -- it was the federal regulators in Voyager, but it -- we all know what effect that seemed to have on it.

So, I mean, obviously the Debtor has been in dialogue with all of the federal regulators. I'm interested in seeing what the settlements actually look like when that's released. Let me end with that.

MR. KOENIG: Okay. Your Honor, earlier in colloquy, you seemed to almost be suggesting once the agreements become public, would you like to file those on the docket so that everybody has ready access?

THE COURT: I think so, so that everybody can see

Page 38 1 it and I quess your claims agent will put it on their 2 website as well --MR. KOENIG: Yes. 3 THE COURT: -- and provide everybody with easy 4 5 access to it. MR. KOENIG: Wonderful. And on the -- on your 7 last point about the state regulators, we're in constant 8 dialogue with them, too. We've urged them in the same way 9 that we urged the federal regulators, the account holders 10 are the victims here. It doesn't make sense for the 11 government to come in and levy huge fines. 12 Of course, they have their rights and, you know, 13 they haven't agreed to anything, but we're -- I would say 14 that the Debtors are cautiously optimistic that given the way that the federal regulators, we were able to reach 15 16 agreement with them, we're hopeful that that will pave the 17 way for similar agreements with the state regulators. 18 That's all that I have. I don't know if you wanted to hear 19 from Mr. Colodny before turning to the agenda. THE COURT: Well, I do. Let me just ask this. 20 21 When do you expect to have an amended disclosure statement? 22 MR. KOENIG: As early as later this week, Your 23 Honor. 24 THE COURT: Okay. So I mean, I -- my chambers, I 25 guess, the Committee was in touch with my courtroom deputy,

Deanna Anderson and maybe you were as well, about dates for -- possible dates for confirmation hearing. And so you're going to need 28 days' notice for objections and a hearing on disclosure statement and you also need 28 days' notice, for objections and hearing on confirmation. So that's obviously after a disclosure statement and ballot are approved for mailing.

So I don't know how all this will fit into the bigger picture. I was asked about a potential two-week block for a confirmation hearing. Assuming that disclosure statement is approved and it goes out for balloting, I was asked about a couple -- I was asked for a two-week time period. That's a little complicated. So I'll give you all some potential dates. Okay, first dates I was -- make sure I got this right.

Okay. So it may not be possible or be more difficult to have two consecutive weeks. All right.

Potential dates are October 2 through 6. On Monday, October 2, we would need to start at 2 p.m. Starting in September, I teach on Monday morning from 9:10 until 11 a.m. at

Columbia. So we can't have a hearing on Monday morning. We can start at two o'clock. So October 2 through 6; 16

through 20. Sixteenth is Monday. Again it's -- have to be a two o'clock start time. Twenty-three -- 23rd through the 27th. That is two consecutive weeks. I don't expect a

response now.

MR. KOENIG: All right, Your Honor --

THE COURT: Just bear with me one more. I've got one more question. So on the -- I gave you those dates, 16th or 20th, 23rd to 27th. The 26th, as of now at least, we would have to start at one o'clock. I have hearing in the morning, a final pretrial conference in what promises to be a long trial. Possible that would move, but -- so those would give you a sense of the dates and you can all confer about it. I don't expect answers now.

MR. KOENIG: We'll coordinate with chambers, and of course, we hope that the confirmation hearing is less than two weeks. We just -- we know the Voyager confirmation hearing was two weeks and if past is prologue, we want to be ready.

THE COURT: So other than this issue about

Mondays, we'll start at 9 a.m. and I'm amenable to going

late. It's not necessarily the preferred action, but I've
- I mean, I've had hearings going into the evening, night.

It's not -- again, not preferred. Usually, if I start at

nine, I usually like to stop by 5:30 unless a witness is

being examined and then I'll go until they're finished,

typically, if they can be finished within a reasonable time.

That'll give you an idea of the time limit. I just have

this issue about Monday starting in September.

Page 41 1 MR. KOENIG: No worries. We will figure it out. 2 We'll coordinate with the other parties and --3 THE COURT: Okay. 4 MR. KOENIG: I assume we will take the first dates 5 you have available. We want to be out of bankruptcy as fast 6 as we can. 7 THE COURT: Right. Okay. 8 MR. KOENIG: All right, I'll cede the lectern to 9 Mr. Colodny. 10 THE COURT: Thank you. Mr. Colodny? 11 MR. COLODNY: good morning, Your Honor. Colodny from White& Case on behalf of the Official Committee 12 13 of Unsecured Creditors. You know, each of the government 14 actions that were filed against Mr. Mashinsky and the Debtors echo what both the examiner found and the Committee 15 16 brought in its class complaint. We believe that the 17 cooperation of the Debtors which was specifically called out 18 by the district attorney was key to getting the outcome that 19 we have here, which is justice being served and the 20 government's commitment to using this process to return 21 funds to account holders. 22 I don't think it's any surprise that that is 23 critical to us and our mantra in this case has been more recoveries to creditors quickly. We believe the account 24 25 holders are the victims here and we think that all of these

Pg 42 of 115 Page 42 actions are large steps forward to making that happen. I could repeat a lot of what Mr. Koenig said, but if Your Honor has any questions about how the Committee views this or the Ripple decision, happy to answer anything. THE COURT: No, I -- look, I mean, I've read Ripple and I've read half a dozen commentaries about it. Again, it's not a binding precedent on this Court. And I --MR. COLODNY: What I'll say about that, Your Honor, is I think we all know that Ripple won't likely be the last word. But we don't intend to wait for the last I think that I agree --THE COURT: Well to the extent -- let me just interrupt. You know, to the extent that issues are consensually resolved in a plan, then you know, it's not --I don't think it's necessary for the Court to resolve the issues. The key, I think, is coming to a consensual agreement to the fullest extent possible. MR. COLODNY: And we are working our hardest to get there. As you said before, consensual resolution in bankruptcy avoids putting money and spending money on litigation and gets money back to customers quicker, which are our two main goals here and I think you'll hear a little more about that today. THE COURT: I -- just for full disclosure, I was -

- I spoke at the ABI Northeast program in Newport, Rhode

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Pg 43 of 115 Page 43 1 Island on Friday and Saturday on a panel on crypto. 2 Pillay was -- the examiner from this case was on the panel 3 as well. She put up the chart of alleged market manipulation, the chart that's in her examiner's report that 4 5 came, as she said, on -- she and I didn't discuss the 6 merits. Okay. I want to make clear. 7 And I didn't opine on any of the issues that would 8 have to -- obviously, there was broad interest last week and 9 a lot of late night reading of things that just came out 10 before the conference. But she put that chart up on the 11 PowerPoint screen of the price movements of the CEL token. 12 But again, I didn't address those issues, but she and I were 13 on the panel together with some other people. Okay. 14 MR. KOENIG: Your Honor, for the record again, 15 it's Chris Koenig. Turning to the agenda this morning. 16 first item up on the agenda is the revised motion to pay the 17 fees of the BRIC as a backup plan sponsor. I know we got 18 into this at length at the last hearing, so I won't repeat 19 myself too much. 20 The last hearing, Your Honor indicated that the 21 BRIC could not provide consultant services to the Debtors 22 and the Debtors could not pay --THE COURT: Well, they'd have to seek retention 23 and I think there were roadblocks to retention. 24

MR. KOENIG: I was just going to say, without

Page 44 1 being retained as a professional, pursuant to Section 327 2 and we agree they probably would have had some issues with 3 conflicts. So the parties heard you loud and clear. We went back to the table. We revised the documents to remove 4 5 the consulting services and to remove the consulting fees. 6 And so we're here seeking approval of the backup commitment 7 fee of \$1.5 million and expense reimbursement. The expense reimbursement will be paid through the date of this order. 8 9 That amount is not expected to exceed 1.5 million. 10 THE COURT: So there were some replies that --11 late replies that was filed that deal with what the fees 12 were being paid for. 13 MR. KOENIG: I think that that was the last 14 hearing perhaps, Your Honor. We haven't had that -- we 15 didn't file for the BRIC. That's on the Series B CEL, Your 16 Honor. 17 THE COURT: Okay. I'm sorry. That is the Series 18 В. 19 MR. KOENIG: So we are proceeding on --20 THE COURT: Yes. 21 MR. KOENIG: -- an uncontested basis, I believe, 22 this morning. The objection deadline passed last Friday. 23 No objections were filed. We're not aware of any informal 24 objections. 25 THE COURT: I'm going to turn to Ms. Cornell, see

1 what the position of the U.S. Trustee is. I noted that there were no further objections that were filed. Ms. 3 Cornell?

MS. CORNELL: Thank you, Your Honor. Cornell (indiscernible) for the United States Trustee. Again, thank you for allowing me to appear virtually this morning. I appreciate it.

Your Honor, we filed our original objection at Docket (indiscernible). These are extremely unusual circumstances proposed by the Debtors and the Committees The amended motion is slightly more palatable but it's still a lot of money. The reviews are an unnecessary expense of the bankruptcy estate, especially when we have the stalking horse fees that are already quite high.

Specifically, we have questions about why BRIC should receive an expense reimbursement. Diligence was performed in advance of the deal and that's a slippery slope for more fees in future cases or even this case. What if there's a backup bid to the backup bidder after the auction is reopened? The line has been drawn and the question is why should further parties be compensated? Thank you, Your Honor.

I guess my question is, it's all very THE COURT: interesting. Why didn't you put it in -- on paper? That is a question to you.

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Page 46 1 MS. CORNELL: It is very interesting, Your Honor, 2 but it's a lot of money in this case and it's just one more 3 party that's being paid. 4 THE COURT: Let me be pointed. Are you objecting 5 to it? 6 MS. CORNELL: Yes, Your Honor. Our --7 THE COURT: Why didn't you file a further --8 MS. CORNELL: -- objection still stands at Docket 9 10 THE COURT: Why didn't you file a further document 11 saying you were objecting, if that's what you're doing? 12 There was an objection deadline of July 14th and no 13 responses by anyone were filed. 14 MS. CORNELL: I understand that, Your Honor. Our 15 position was that we filed our objection in 2847 and that it 16 was not overruled and that it still stands. 17 THE COURT: It was sustained with respect to the 18 consulting fees. They went back to the drawing board. But 19 -- okay. Your verbal objection is untimely and overruled. 20 I'm happy to be able to approve the backup plan for the 21 sponsor. I commented at the time of the last hearing, 22 contrary to the position taken by the U.S. Trustee in the circumstances of this case, in my view, the necessity of 23 moving forward toward confirmation as rapidly as reasonably 24 25 possible, that it was -- it is important to have the backup

bidder plan and it does seem to me, that they are performing important services in support of the fee that they would be entitled to. It is no doubt rich and in -- I want to make clear that in other circumstances, I would be very reluctant to approve it. I think the examples of what happened in Voyager show the importance of having this backup bid with a somewhat alternative plan structure in the event that, you know, the sponsor proposal winds up failing or being unable to close. So it is approved.

MR. KOENIG: Thank you, Your Honor. We'll submit the order to chambers.

THE COURT: (indiscernible). Go ahead.

MR. KOENIG: Thank you, Your Honor. Up next is the proposed settlement motion with the Series B. The dispute with the Series B holders over their entitlement to recover from the Debtors' estates is perhaps the most protracted and contested issue in these cases. It started it when the Series B holders sought appointment of an equity committee early in the case.

It's resulted in one fully litigated trial and opinion that has been appealed and it spawned a variety of other litigation that sought -- that had the potential to delay these cases, delay confirmation, and delay emergency. Court's decisions to date had already generated two appeals and future decisions were likely to also be appealed. And

these disputes would have created enormous cost for the estates. If this litigation ran to its conclusion -- we had dozens of depositions scheduled, many days of trial scheduled.

Even if the Debtors won the litigation, their stakeholders would have nonetheless lost by bearing the cost of litigating these complex issues as well as the likely delay to confirmation and emergence. And although the Debtors were confident in their litigation position, there was nonetheless some risk that the Series B could win and if they won, they likely would have been entitled to recover up to \$600 million from the Debtors' estates.

So we engaged in settlement negotiations and we reached a deal. By the settlement motion, Debtors seek to implement the Series B settlement between the company, the Committee, and the initial consenting Series B holders. It fully resolves the litigation between the parties and allows the Debtors to proceed towards confirmation without needing to litigate these key issues.

That \$25 million is going to be funded out of the prior sale of the GK8 platform which had been segregated pending the resolution of this dispute and will involve the release of all claims between the initial consenting Series B parties on the one hand and the Debtors and the Committee on the

other hand.

The way we're going to implement the settlement is through a substantive consolidation of CNL and LLC. The Debtors filed a motion to substantively consolidate those entities on May 1st and the Committee also filed a motion to substantively consolidate those entities. That objection deadline passed and no party's objected to it there or in the settlement motion here that implements that relief.

The only objections that we received to the settlement motion were from Mr. Herrmann and Mr. Frishberg. Probably saw in our reply that we filed yesterday, we were able to resolve that dispute with language in a revised proposed order. The only remaining dispute -- the only remaining objection, I should say, is from one of the other Series B holders who did not sign the settlement, appears to object to the allocation of the \$25 million, but they did not participate in this litigation. They were not litigating against the company.

From the company's perspective, the settlement makes sense as cost saved and we believe that the cost that would have been incurred would have been tremendous here and may have even exceeded the \$25 million settlement. But from our perspective, we were paying \$25 million to resolve the dispute. The allocation was not so much our issue. The Series B holders proposed an allocation. We asked them, did

your fees actually exceed \$24 million and they represented that it did. Probably saw in their reply yesterday.

THE COURT: That was what I mistakenly referred to earlier.

MR. KOENIG: No problem, Your Honor. But what I would argue is, the objecting party is not bound by the settlement. It wasn't offered to them. Any Series B holder that wanted to sign the settlement, receive their share of the proceeds, and grant releases, is free to do so. The objecting party can retain whatever rights they have. They have not sued the Debtors.

The substantive consolidation would go forward and they have whatever rights they have under the Chapter 11 plan or otherwise. But we submit that the settlement is in the eminent business judgment of the company; avoids costly, protracted, and risky litigation; and should be approved. We filed a declaration of Mr. Ferraro in support of the settlement motion in Docket No. 2967. I'm happy to move that into evidence at this time.

THE COURT: All right. Are there any objections to the Court admitting in evidence the Ferraro declaration, ECF 2967? All right, it's admitted into evidence.

(ECF 2967 entered into evidence)

MR. KOENIG: Your Honor, that concludes my opening presentation. I don't know if the Committee or the Series B

wish to be heard before we turn it over.

THE COURT: I do want to hear from the Committee.

MR. KOENIG: Thank you, Your Honor.

MR. AGANGA-WILLIAMS: Temidayo Aganga-Williams,
Your Honor, from Selendy Gay Elsberg. Your Honor, the
Committee joins with all the reasons that Mr. Koenig just
advanced, part of the settlement agreement with the Series
B. From the Committee's standpoint, the settlement terms
are straightforward and the agreement satisfies the
threshold for reasonableness under Rule 9019. The agreement
settles all litigation between the Debtors and the Committee
and the Series B preferred holders and seeks the substantive
consolidation of the CNL and LLC estates in exchange for a
\$25 million cash payment and the release of all claims.

I won't rehash all the terms that Debtors' counsel just did, Your Honor, but I will note that as Your Honor knows, our firms role in this bankruptcy was to represent the Committee in certain matters that were adverse to the Series B preferred holders. And this included investigating potential claims against preferred equity holders. When the parties reached this agreement, the settlement agreement, our firm had been investigating those claims for months.

Now, while Your Honor will expect, the specifics of our investigation are privileged we'll give Your Honor a general sense of the work that we did, which included

investigating and reviewing publicly available information and the substance of Court filings like the examiner's report, and also the voluminous documentary record produced over the course of this bankruptcy.

We have begun depositions in connection with the sub con litigation and we also notified the Series B preferred holders that we would promptly pursue additional document and deposition discovery under Rule 2004. Of course, our investigation was still ongoing when the settlement was reached, but we advised the Committee members that based on the facts and circumstances as they were known to us at the time and the relevant law pertaining to potential claims subject to the releases, our investigation process and findings to date and the value of the settlement agreement, customers supported the acceptance of an agreement here.

Ultimately, we took those findings to the

Committee and provided our advice and the Committee voted to
accept the settlement agreement. We believe the benefit of
the settlement is significant and satisfies the threshold
for reasonableness, and we respectfully request that the

Court so-order the proposed order, approving settlement and
consolidating the CNL and LLC estates.

THE COURT: So let me ask you this, because in particular for the Earn account holders, the impact of

substantive consolidation in light of the Court's earlier decision which I recognized was appealed, that the Earn account holders' only contract claims were against LLC; could you just briefly discuss the actual impact on Earn account holders by the provision of this agreement which essentially -- which does provide for substantive consolidation of CNL and LLC?

MR. AGANGA-WILLIAMS: Yes, Your Honor. Well, a negotiated term of the order of approving the settlement would be that it resolves all pending litigation. So with the -- with regard to appeals from the Court's order regarding the contract claims --

THE COURT: No, I understand that. The appeals are resolved. But I think maybe Mr. Colodny wants to address this, if he could. What I would just like, you know, sort of a plain English explanation of the impact on LLC creditor claims as a result of the substantive consolidation during the bankruptcy law at issue. Go ahead, Mr. Colodny.

MR. COLODNY: Happy to, Your Honor. So as you know, the Debtors' assets are held at different legal entities. There's a substantial amount of liquid cryptocurrency investments and other assets that are held at CNL. Under Your Honor's ruling, the Earn claimants only had contract claims against LLC. We filed our class claim

asserting other claims which has not been adjudicated yet and I think we're going to get to that in a status conference after this matter is adjudicated.

But what the substantive consolidation will do is merge the two estates so that Earn claimants will have claims against the assets and be entitled to recover from the Debtors' estates at CNL, which holds the substantial -- I don't know if substantial majority, but holds the majority of the Debtors' assets.

So the settlement not only resolves claims against the Series B litigation and litigation before this Court, but it provides current account holders with access to all of the assets held by CNL.

THE COURT: So for example, which entity owns mining directly or indirectly? That's up through CNL?

MR. COLODNY: Correct. Mining --

THE COURT: And so to the extent there's value in CNL, the Earn account -- excuse me. To the extent that there's value in mining, the Earn account holders benefit from, as a result of the substantive consolidation even though mining was held not by LLC, but by CNL, correct?

MR. COLODNY: Entirely correct, Your Honor.

Mining is a subsidiary of CNL. To the extent there are

direct claims against mining, those claims will recover

first. There's no funded debt or substantial funded debt

claims against mining, so there is equity value which we believe will flow up to CNL. The substantive consolidation of CNL and LLC will result in Earn account holders having -- and general unsecured creditors of either entities having claims of the equity value of mining.

THE COURT: Okay, thank you. Thank you very much.

All right. Preferred holders want to be heard? Mr.

Leblanc, do you want to be heard?

MR. LEBLANC: Good morning, Your Honor. Andrew
Leblanc of Milbank on behalf of Community First Partners,
one of the Series B investors, and Mr. Metzger is here in
the courtroom with me. He represents, of course, CDP
Investissements, another of the most -- more significant
holders and Mr. Dunn is actually on the TV screen here with
us, joining by video.

Your Honor, we obviously support the Court's approval of the settlement. I will echo the comments of Mr. Koenig. This was among the most intense litigations I've ever been a part of in about 25 years of practice. It was very hard fought. There were an enormous number of significant issues. I think we were, at the day we settled, we had 17 depositions coming up in the next three days.

Obviously, the amount that would have been expended by the Debtor parties would have been astronomical as it would have been by my clients. And so we reached the resolution. We

think it's appropriate and we'd urge the court to approve it.

With respect to the one objection, and if Your
Honor wants to hear it from me after they lodge their
objection, I agree completely with Mr. Koenig. We've
represented to the Court and I don't think anybody disputes
and I -- in fairness, I don't think anyone could dispute
that the quantum of fees exceeds what has been allocated to
pay for those fees. What we didn't want -- we obviously
litigated this at our own expense despite our efforts to get
an equity committee for a period of over a year.

And we were trying to get a fair allocation to make sure that our fees were reimbursed to the greatest extent possible, but we did want to make an offer to other people which are free to choose to accept or not. And this holder apparently chose not to accept it. That means they're not bound by it. They want to pick up the baton and continue the litigation in light of the litigation schedule and the findings that Your Honor would enter if Your Honor enters the order. That's their choice. We wish them the best of luck if they were to do that. But that's their choice.

THE COURT: What was the -- what is the face amount of the Series B preferred?

MR. LEBLANC: In total, Your Honor --

Page 57 1 THE COURT: Yes. 2 MR. LEBLANC: -- it's about \$690 million. 3 clients hold approximately 600 million of it. THE COURT: Okay. Anything else you want to add? 4 MR. LEBLANC: I don't, Your Honor. I urge the 5 6 Court to approve the settlement. 7 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you very much. 8 MR. LEBLANC: Thank you, Your Honor. 9 THE COURT: Anybody else want to speak in favor of 10 the settlement? All right, let me hear from the -- limited 11 objections, but let me from counsel for the limited 12 objectors, if they want to be heard. 13 MS. ADLER: Yes, Susan Adler on behalf of Anderson 14 Investment, JR Investment Trust, and David Hoffman. 15 you for allowing me to appear telephonically. I hope the 16 sound is okay. (indiscernible) the parties in reaching the 17 settlement, understand that it was (indiscernible) that the 18 litigation expenses were going (indiscernible) higher. 19 My -- the reason this is a limited objection is 20 that there's simply not enough information in that agreement 21 for my clients to determine whether it works for them and 22 you know, (indiscernible) since the first -- you know, since I first filed the objection (indiscernible) you know, my 23 clients (indiscernible) that's an issue. But again, this 24 25 agreement (indiscernible) require them to give up certain

litigation rights and to take certain stances in the future and right now, this is the -- you know, this is the best time to get these questions answered for us.

You know, it's more financially feasible for them to get these questions answered, answered now. So that is the source of our limited objection. We still don't know how the (indiscernible) were allocated or any analysis. So -- but I do, you know, I do applaud the efforts of the parties and I realize they're done -- that this has been very hard fought out.

THE COURT: All right, thank you very much. Does anybody else wish to be heard in opposition? Please come up. Mr. Herrmann.

MR. HERRMANN: Immanuel Herrmann, pro se creditor.

THE COURT: Nice to see you in the courtroom, Mr.

16 Herrmann.

MR. HERRMANN: Yes, nice to see you, Your Honor.

So one, our objection, we were able to fully resolve it. So

I'm glad that that that was the case. First off, I just

wanted to say, you know, this is a long fought battle. I'm

glad to see it come to an end. I just wanted to say a few

things. One, customers may have direct claims against, I

think in particular, WestCap and CEBQ. They made certain

claims. I think customers relied on that, you know, some

customers relied on it in keeping their assets on the

Page 59 1 platform. You know, we believe those claims are preserved. 2 This settlement with our changes also preserves GK8 claims, or at least maybe it did already, but you know, 3 we'll note that GK8 made false claims of insurance which 4 5 actually were marketed on the website and were included in 6 one of the complaints and may have been the FTC complaint. 7 And then finally, I just wanted to say on the 8 appeal, we're still waiting for a full substantive 9 consolidation and a disclosure of what are the non-filing 10 entities. So there's still -- this would consolidate the 11 parent company, but there's still a mining company that sits 12 above the substantively consolidated entities. 13 THE COURT: I saw you filed an emergency motion 14 for a stay in the District Court, a stay of the Court's 15 opinion on which entities your claims reside against. Has 16 the District Court ruled on that yet? 17 MR. HERRMANN: No, Your Honor, they have not yet 18 ruled on that. 19 THE COURT: Okay. 20 MR. HERRMANN: I believe that that's resolved in 21 the changes that were made --22 THE COURT: All right. MR. HERRMANN: -- to the order. 23 24 THE COURT: And you'll advise the District Court 25 of that?

Page 60 1 MR. HERRMANN: And -- yes, Your Honor. And also 2 if we're able to resolve the substantive consolidation 3 issues, then I do believe that ultimately would end the appeal, if we could deal with the other entities that 4 5 haven't been substantively consolidated. 6 THE COURT: Okay. Thank you, Mr. Herrmann. 7 MR. HERRMANN: Thank you. THE COURT: Anybody else? Mr. Fishberg. Nice to 8 9 see you in the courtroom as well. 10 MR. FRISHBERG: Good morning, Your Honor. Danial 11 Frishberg, pro se. My notes were kind of taken in security, 12 so I'll have to work on this --13 THE COURT: Just speak clearly and --14 MR. FRISHBERG: Sorry. My notes were taken at 15 security so --16 THE COURT: Your notes were taken? 17 MR. FRISHBERG: They're on my phone. 18 THE COURT: You can't bring a -- only lawyers can 19 bring phones. 20 MR. FRISHBERG: We were able to bring it to 21 mediation yesterday, so I assumed I could bring it. 22 What Mr. Herrmann said about how there's a mining entity that's not consolidated, I'm not sure if that's fully 23 24 accurate, but I am -- but my understanding of the corporate 25 structure is that there's -- I believe it's Celsius Lending

LLC which holds in excess of a billion dollars in assets which sits directly underneath the parent company which would not be consolidated in these -- in the settlement. THE COURT: Well, any value of any subsidiaries held directly by CNL flows up to CNL and by virtue -- it's the same thing with mining, thereby any value that flows up to CNL is now -- would now be available to LLC's creditors. MR. FRISHBERG: It's not under CNL, I believe. There's one under CNL and there's two lending entities, one under CNL and one directly under the Delaware parent company. It's on the flow chart going through CNL just directly into the parent company. Under the current proposed plan, I believe Earn holders would be last to get -- have claims against it, since it would have to go into the other entities after all claims are fully satisfied. At least that is my understanding of it. It is a

fairly complex structure. Yeah, and as Mr. Herrmann said it was the FTC company that (indiscernible) the GK8 claims.

Thank you, Your Honor.

THE COURT: Okay. Anybody else want to be heard?

Mr. Koenig, do you have any response?

MR. KOENIG: Again, Chris Koenig. Thank you, Your Honor. Mr. Herrmann agreed, the settlement does not include any nonconsensual releases of any direct claims. To be clear, it releases any claims that the company, the Debtors

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have against the initial consenting Series B holders as well as any derivative claims that creditors may seek to bring on the Debtors' behalf. But of course, there's no nonconsensual releases and if there are direct claims there are direct claims.

I repeat what I would say to Ms. Adler's client that the settlement, they retain whatever rights they have. It was an open offer to them that they apparently did not accept and we believe that the settlement is reasonable and should be approved pursuant to Bankruptcy Rule 9019.

THE COURT: All right. So the Court is going to grant the motion, overrules the limited objections. I intend to issue an opinion or order within next day or two that deals with -- just so, no suspense, but the motion is granted.

MR. KOENIG: Thank you, Your Honor. I believe we're now going to have a status conference on the bar date and related issues that sort of stem out of the Series B settlement, that was under the Series B heading. Mr. Colodny filed that last night. I'll cede the lectern.

THE COURT: Mr. Colodny.

MR. COLODNY: Thank you, Your Honor. Aaron

Colodny on behalf of the Official Committee of Unsecured

Creditors. Your Honor asked about an amended disclosure

statement. I hope Mr. Koenig did not over promise by later

this week, but --

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MR. KOENIG: I said as early as later this week.

MR. COLODNY: True.

THE COURT: What's your prediction, Mr. Colodny?

MR. COLODNY: Mid next week. Your Honor, we --

THE COURT: Have a nice weekend.

MR. COLODNY: They always are. We -- I want to start again with the government complaints. I think they echo what we brought in our class claim and what the examiner found. They show that Mr. Mashinsky and Celsius' prepetition management actions had real effects on account holders and they devastated a lot of people. As of the initial bar date, 23 -- about 23,000 account holders filed proof of claim totaling over \$70 billion.

The Committee also brought a class proof of claim asserting fraud, misrepresentation, and other non-contract claims on behalf of all account holders. And per this Court's order approving the filing of that class proof of claim, the bar date is currently over.

We need to close the bar gate before we solicit a plan and we wanted to use this opportunity to inform everyone, the Debtors and the Committee have discussed and we intend to file a notice with Your Honor's approval, as is required by that order, to set it for August 2nd. So with Your Honor's approval, we can file a notice of proposed

order setting the bar for August 2nd, if that's okay with Your Honor.

THE COURT: So tell me, what if anything has -- will happen with respect to the class claim?

MR. COLODNY: Getting to that, Your Honor. So we've got 23,000 claims asserting \$70 billion. Resolving all of those is going to take an incredible amount of time if we were to go claim by claim. On the same hand, account holders having to prove fraud and specific damages is going to take a significant amount of effort. And I think we saw when the bellwether trials were attempted scheduling, that that is going to be difficult, time consuming, and expensive, both for the account holders and for the estate, and that is money out of the account holders' pockets in twofold.

The potential harm to account holders, though, is much greater than that because to the extent we are not able to resolve those claims, the Debtors are going to hold -- have to hold back proceeds on the effective date because they can't distribute all of the funds that they have and if someone else comes back later and Your Honor finds they have a valid claim, not receive anything because the funds have been distributed.

So what that means in practical reality is if we don't resolve the claims prior to the effective date, the

disclosure statement recoveries will in fact be significantly less in terms of an initial distribution.

There's still a good faith attempt to estimate the actual distributions to creditors.

So we have been talking with the Debtors and working to find a way to address this. We are nearing the terms of a settlement and what that settlement would provide is that the Debtors would agree to certify the class and for the allowance of a class claim on behalf of all account holders, which would provide for an incremental recovery to account holders to account for damages as a result of the Debtors' noncontract claims.

Any account holder who wishes to opt out and pursue their own litigation is free to do so, and we will provide a disclosure which will be approved by this Court which will allow -- if approved by this Court will allow an opt-out of that settlement. If they opt out of the settlement though, they won't receive the additional damages. They will be left to the claim process to resolve their claims and they will likely have to prove those claims in order to receive a distribution from the Debtors' estate because they will have a disputed claim under the plan until that time.

We believe that the resolution of these noncontract claims through this proposed settlement will allow

the Debtors to hold back less on account of disputed claims and distribute more value to account holders, more funds to account holders faster. That's been our mantra for a long time.

I want to make a couple of things clear. We're -there will have to be certain exceptions from this. We're
not trying to resolve claims where people dispute what
amounts are in what accounts and we're working with the
Debtors and the class claimants to find out what those
exceptions are going to be. It also will not affect voting
on the plan in any way.

We're not seeking to impose a large claim that the Committee will vote. I've seen that. In no way. We filed a -- the Debtors filed a disclosure statement motion by which every account holder will vote the amount of their scheduled claims. We don't intend to effect that. This will be a democratic process. We're going to need numbers of votes and that's what we intend to do here.

So I think, more to come, but I wanted to preview with Your Honor and everyone that's listening --

THE COURT: Give me some sense of the anticipated schedule of this. I think -- look. It's a huge creditor body, spread around the world. And I mean, I'm not -- haven't been asked to rule. I'm not ruling on anything at this point. It would be unfortunate if this affected the

disclosure statement, plan confirmation process. You know, it actually brings to mind a very vivid experience I have as a practicing lawyer in the Drexel -- Milken, Drexel Burnham litigation where there was a global class action which actually was, the construct was part of a settlement plan and there was an opt-out procedure and Judge Milton Pollack was the judge who presided.

Judge Pollack called the opt-outs into Court and I was -- I represented one of the main defendants in the cases and was there for these and he would listen and he would say fine. When are you going to be ready to go to trial? I wouldn't do quite what he did. He would say, we'll start the trial next Tuesday. But you know, I mean, people reserve the right to opt out, but they need to understand what the potential ramifications of that are. That -- I'm not -- you know, I will hear and judge whatever it is that comes before me and will fairly judge it.

I just, I only tell this story because at the end of the day, all the opt-outs with through their opt-outs because the settlement actually was a pretty rich settlement and, you know, I think they all became convinced this was the best avenue for a fast recovery. But the consequences for those who opt out, they're catching a tiger by the tail at that point. So -- but we'll -- let's see where this goes.

1 Thank you for -- so what is -- with respect to 2 respect to the issue you raised about the amended bar date, 3 August 2, that's satisfactory to me. MR. COLODNY: Thank you, Your Honor. And then 4 5 with respect to the proposed settlement, I'll step into Mr. 6 Koenig's shoes and say I'm hopeful we can get it on by the 7 end of the week. And our intention is not to slow down 8 disclosure statement hearing, confirmation. We want to keep 9 moving to get out of bankruptcy as quick as possible. 10 THE COURT: Okay. All right, thank you, Mr. 11 Colodny. 12 MR. COLODNY: Thank you. 13 THE COURT: Anybody else want to be heard? 14 MR. SABIN: It's good to be back, Your Honor. Jeff Sabin from Venable on behalf of Ignat Tuganov who is 15 16 one of the three lead representatives referred to in terms 17 of the class action proof of plan. I rise to make clear 18 very concisely that we've had these discussions with Mr. 19 Colodny. You know, our -- I can only give superlatives in 20 terms of the work and time that he's put and his colleagues 21 have put into this. We support exactly what he has 22 otherwise conveyed to you. Timing is very important to us. 23 We are also engaged as you know in a mediation 24 currently or concurrently with his hearing, continuing 25 shortly thereafter. And I do believe that the process

outlined and contemplated by Mr. Colodny is the right one for this case. I also want to point out that the class proof of claim has been filed against all Debtors, okay, not just a particular Debtor who may or may not be substantively consolidated.

I also wish to point out that as you, I think, have heard one of the issues that is still unresolved and we hope to be resolved in connection with the mediation and the plan process is whether additional Debtors may be substantively consolidated, some or all of them. And indeed, we've raised that issue in our separate adversary proceeding, which we also hope soon is resolved by part of mediation (indiscernible). And for all of those reasons, I just wanted not update informationally, Your Honor, in terms of where at least one of the class representatives is.

THE COURT: Thank you, Mr. Sabin. Mr. Colodny, go ahead. I'm sorry --

MR. KOENIG: No problem, Your Honor, Chris Koenig.

Just very briefly, want to echo what Mr. Colodny said.

We've been struggling with the claims process, how to deal with them fairly, equitably, and at the same time we want to get distributions to customers as soon as possible and for 23,000 claims, that could drag on for years. So what we've -- what we have an agreement in principle with the Committee

Page 70 1 on is, this is a process that will offer account holders an 2 additional claim on account of fraud, misrepresentation, and the like. It is an open offer. They can take it or not. 3 4 If they believe that they can achieve a higher recovery, 5 than what's in the offer, they're free to opt out. But from 6 our perspective, fraud is a heightened pleading standard. 7 It's very difficult for individuals to prove. And although 8 it's in the examiner's report, actually proving it is 9 difficult, time consuming, costly. You might have to hire a 10 lawyer. So we think that this is an equitable and speedy 11 way to give common sense to the account holders that want it 12 and if they want to opt out, they are certainly free to do 13 so. 14 THE COURT: Thank you very much. 15 MR. KOENIG: Thank you. I believe next up on the 16 agenda is -- we're at fee application --17 THE COURT: Yes. MR. KOENIG: So I'll cede the lectern to Mr. 18 19 Sontchi. 20 MAN: Your Honor --THE COURT: You're excused. 21 22 MR. HANCOCK: Good morning, Your Honor. Mark 23 Hancock of Godfrey & Kahn on behalf of the fee examiner. 24 Chris Sontchi is also with me here today. Your Honor, on 25 July 7th, we filed the fee examiner summary report with

Page 71 1 recommendations for 16 fee applications for approval, 2 subject to various consensual reductions. Happy to answer 3 any questions you have for me or for Judge Sontchi -- Chris 4 Sontchi regarding that summary report. 5 THE COURT: Mr. Sontchi, do you want to be heard? 6 MR. SONTCHI: Good morning, Your Honor. 7 THE COURT: Good morning. MR. SONTCHI: Chris Sontchi, the Court appointed 8 fee examiner. Yeah, just very briefly, I would like to 9 10 applaud the work of the firms to adapt themselves to the 11 sort of rules we laid down at the beginning and we dealt 12 with in connection with the first interim fee applications 13 and we saw a lot of changing in billing behavior which is 14 normal by the parties and that resulted in a much smoother 15 process to resolve the claims that are -- the claims that 16 were brought by the professionals. 17 I'm here specifically in case you had any 18 questions in connection with the Voyager issue that we did 19 address. 20 THE COURT: Yeah, why don't you just -- so that, 21 just very briefly describe what the Voyager issue is so that 22 that anybody who is on Zoom --23 MR. SONTCHI: Sure. THE COURT: -- in the courtroom will understand. 24 25 MR. SONTCHI: So the Voyager issue is that

Kirkland & Ellis is lead counsel to Voyager, which is a separate crypto case. They are also the counsel to Celsius.

Voyager had a bar date for the filing of proofs of claim and Celsius did not file proof of claim prior to the bar date.

Additionally, because of that relationship and other relationships, the Debtor hired conflicts counsel which was Akin Gump. After -- actually, I believe it was Mr. Fishberg who brought it to everyone's attention after it was brought to the attention of the estate that the bar date had been missed.

Kirkland and Akin both got very busy to file a motion in the Voyager case seeking to allow the filing of a late proof of claim. Ultimately, that was denied by Judge Wiles who noted that among other things that it could not constitute excusable neglect when the same law firm represented Celsius and Voyager and that law firm did not file timely proof of claim.

That litigation continues. Akin Gump has taken over complete control of that litigation and is negotiating with a series of conflict counsel at Voyager. It's been very difficult to get someone to talk to at Voyager. I think they're on their fourth law firm that they're dealing with to try to resolve that on a consensual basis. That's the current status. I wasn't asked -- that's your job -- whether there was any substantive issue to deal with. I was

-- I viewed my role in looking at the fees that were sought in connection with the filing of the late proof of claim whether they met the reasonableness standard, and we had -- I had and my attorneys had meetings with Kirkland and Akin on these issues and we're not talking about a ton of money that was spent. Between the two law firms, it gets well into the six figures. And both firms agreed to lower their recovery by -- and in connection with Kirkland by a substantial cut, which was -- we made a request, they agreed to it. And as a result, the fees that are being approved or seeking to be approved today constitute a discount to the estate of some of the costs associated with pursuing the late filed proof of claim in front of Judge Wiles.

THE COURT: Is it fair to say, though, that approval -- if I approve the fees as revised, it does not release any claims arising from the circumstances that you described?

MR. SONTCHI: Correct. Yes, absolutely, Your Honor. This isn't some sort of release. If there are malpractice claims or any other kind of claims against Kirkland or Akin in connection with this issue, those are obviously fully preserved either on behalf of the -- well, on behalf of the estate or if there are any other individualized claims, which I have no idea if there are.

THE COURT: All right.

MR. SONTCHI: If I could also -- oh, I'm sorry.

THE COURT: No, please go ahead. I also wanted to discuss Ms. Pillay's work. So we took a very long look and had many conversations with her in connection with the fee application of Jenner, which was about \$10 million. In the context of at least early on when this was being discussed, way back last fall, numbers of in the, you know, \$2 million cap, something like that was talk -- were talked about. We wanted to make sure we understood what occurred here.

And I have -- first of all, I also spent a lot of time talking to professionals in our world who are involved in this case, as well as the professionals in this case about their belief about the merits of the reports that the examiner provided and whether they were worth \$10 million.

And I could tell you universally, throughout the universe of that we live in, everyone said they were absolutely worth the amount that was spent. So we had some concerns.

It was a full court press, but she was given a very short period of time. She was required to do two reports, not one report. And I've read a lot of reports in my career. You've read a lot of reports. It's just a phenomenal piece of work. So at the end of the day, we -- they did agree to some changes, some minor -- well, not minor. Some significant changes in connection with staffing, using higher billed rates when it could have been

lower billed rates. Sort of typical stuff.

We took no deduction or asked for no deduction in connection with sort of overstaffing or anything along those lines. Given the unique circumstances of this, this is -- this parrots what you said earlier, the unique circumstances of this case, the timeframe, the complexity, the amount of work that had to be done. I felt it was an appropriate amount to approve.

THE COURT: All right. I'll just make a brief comment about the expense of the examiner. I think that the two reports were extraordinary. That's the first observation I would make. And this is not the -- I've never been a giant fan of examiners. I've had examiners in two very large cases and they were expensive. Just referring to this case in particular, I think that the examiner has delivered value for what the cost was. I will never know.

I think state and federal regulators, DOJ would have been much, much more active throughout in the absence of an examiner. I'm not questioning the Committee's ability to conduct an investigation. I don't think they could have delivered the reports, given the constituency, the reports that were delivered by the examiner. So actually, I view this as an example where yes, an examiner is expensive but I think Ms. Pillay and her colleagues add credibility.

You know, the scope originally had been negotiated

between the Committee, the U.S. Trustee, and the Debtor. I think it was important, people may disagree, I was very interested in the comments and recommendations from pro se creditors who I think know a lot more about crypto than I do. And I think I commented at the time, I thought they raised some very good issues and the examiner's scope, the scope of the investigation was expanded.

I think that it -- I've read examiners reports before. I think these two reports done in very, very compressed timeframe were fairly extraordinary. I appreciate the scrutiny that you and your counsel took in reviewing the fee applications as well. So I just want to make that comment about the examiner report.

I do -- and either, I don't know whether you or your counsel want to address the issue about the deferral of the Latham & Watkins fee application.

MR. SONTCHI: I'd be happy to address that, Your Honor. Latham & Watkins is regulatory, special regulatory counsel to Celsius. And indeed, they were involved in the early discussions with the government entities. We have an ongoing dialogue with them and indeed we have a meeting -- I have a meeting scheduled with them next Monday here in New York face to face to discuss these issues. With regard to two issues, one are just technical issues. Their time records are difficult for us to understand.

Page 77 1 And second, more substantive issues. 2 took over for them, for all intents and purposes, in 3 February. And so the issues with Latham are pretty isolated 4 to the November to February -- excuse me, beginning of the 5 case to February sort of timeframe. Kirkland is really 6 taking by far the laboring oar with the regulatory issues 7 now. So, rather than prematurely -- well, there are two 8 9 things. One, we just need more information and need an 10 under -- better understanding of what happened, why Kirkland 11 took over, et cetera. And then also we just need some help 12 with, from them frankly on the quality of their time 13 records. So it's an ongoing dialogue and rather than 14 getting into any kind of dispute when hopefully there won't 15 be a dispute, we're just continuing so we can continue to 16 have these discussions. 17 And as I said, we have a meeting next week here in 18 New York on these issues. 19 THE COURT: Thank you very much. 20 MR. SONTCHI: You're welcome. 21 THE COURT: All right. So --22 MR. SONTCHI: May I be excused? 23 THE COURT: Yeah, you are. 24 MR. SONTCHI: Thank you.

Actually, you might want hold on --

THE COURT:

Page 78 1 MR. SONTCHI: Okay. All right. 2 THE COURT: -- another minute. MR. SONTCHI: Guess I should wait to see if the 3 4 motion's approved. 5 MR. HANCOCK: Yes, Your Honor. Anything further? 6 THE COURT: No. What I was going to say is, I've 7 commented in many cases before that reviewing fee 8 applications is the least enjoyable part of my job but I 9 take the responsibility very seriously. And I think I've 10 also commented, I haven't been a giant fan of fee examiners, 11 but this case has sort of maybe turned my view around about it. So what I have before me today are 18 professional fee 12 13 applications for the period from November 1, 2022 through 14 February 28, 2023, the second interim period. 15 And the fee examiner filed his second report. 16 It's at ECF 2975, which recommends the Court approve 16 of 17 the applications with certain stipulated reductions and 18 defer consideration of two applications. Those are the 19 Latham applications. And I reviewed -- I really have 20 reviewed them clearly and my clerks and interns have spent a 21 lot of time on this. 22 I think the fee examiner's report and recommendation is exceedingly well done and I do not -- I 23 24 think this may be one of the few times in a big case I can 25 say this. I don't have any issues that I want to raise.

I'm satisfied with the fee examiner's report, the reductions which they got applicants to agree to. I think they were all appropriate, in my view. And so believe it or not, the report and recommendations are adopted in full. The fee applications are approved, fees and expenses approved as set forth in the fee examiner's report.

You know, in Exhibit A, report Exhibit A shows 16 of those applications and for both fees and expenses and Exhibit B are the two Latham applications that are being deferred. So with that, that's why I thought I'd have you stay for a minute because I didn't -- it really is unnecessary to go through each of the applications. So, I appreciate all the work that went in, Mr. Sontchi, and your counsel as well.

MR. HANCOCK: Thank you, Your Honor. Appreciate it.

THE COURT: Anything else that -- you know, I have -- this is jam packed day and I have -- I know we have some status conferences set, so let's try and very quickly, Mr. Koenig, you go through them because actually I have -- I'm already 15 minutes behind for the next hearing, so --

MR. KOENIG: Your Honor, Chris Koenig. I think I can be very brief. So at the last hearing, you directed us to meet and confer with the adversary plaintiffs to try to come up with a schedule. We're very close on a schedule.

The schedule would end with one joint hearing but all of the other parties have agreed, we will have one joint hearing.

We're just working through some scheduling issues because August, September, travel, holidays, all of those sorts of things, but we expect to have a consensual proposed scheduling order, I think later this week.

THE COURT: Okay, thank you. Does anybody want to be heard on that?

MR. ADLER: Good morning, Your Honor. David Adler from McCarter & English on behalf of the Ad Hoc Borrower Group. Just want to say that I've spoken to Mr. Shanks, both Mr. Shanks, Christopher and Fred, as well as counsel for the Georgiou matter. They have agreed for consolidated hearing.

I got a number of emails yesterday from Kirkland regarding scheduling, which generally seemed okay to me and we're looking essentially, the trigger point would be filing a motion to dismiss on the ad hoc complaint and we're looking at a hearing in early September. And I just wanted to make sure that that was acceptable to Your Honor. I think it would be the September omnibus date.

THE COURT: Okay. In principle it is. I can't tell you -- I've tried to make sure I don't have conflicting calendars with omnibus dates, but I have, unfortunately, on a couple of them I had. I don't know that -- I'm not

Page 81 1 suggesting there is one on this one. I don't know. 2 MR. ADLER: I just wanted to advise. 3 THE COURT: Trying to do this is as orderly and as 4 quickly as possible. Any settlement prospects? 5 MR. ADLER: We're continuing, Your Honor. As soon 6 as we get done here, we're going back to see Judge Wiles. A 7 lot of parties there yesterday, a lot of discussion, and 8 hopefully we will have something positive to report the next 9 hearing. 10 THE COURT: That would be -- that really would 11 please me if you were able to resolve this. Okay. 12 MR. ADLER: Thank you, Your Honor. 13 THE COURT: Thank you very much. Mr. Koenig, 14 anything else I need to hear? 15 MR. KOENIG: Nothing further. Thank you, Your 16 Honor. 17 THE COURT: All right. MR. AGANGA-WILLIAMS: Judge, if we may be excused. 18 19 THE COURT: Just identify your name, okay. 20 MR. AGANGA-WILLIAMS: Temidayo Williams. 21 THE COURT: Everybody can be excused. We're 22 adjourned. 23 MR. AGANGA-WILLIAMS: Thank you. 24 THE COURT: Okay. Because I'm already about 17 25 minutes late.

| | Pg 83 of 115 | | |
|----|-------------------------------|------|---------|
| | | | Page 83 |
| 1 | INDEX | | |
| 2 | | | |
| 3 | RULINGS | | |
| 4 | | Page | Line |
| 5 | Backup bidder plan, approved | 46 | 20 |
| 6 | | | |
| 7 | Series B settlement, approved | 62 | 12 |
| 8 | | | |
| 9 | Fee applications, approved | 79 | 5 |
| 10 | | | |
| 11 | | | |
| 12 | | | |
| 13 | | | |
| 14 | | | |
| 15 | | | |
| 16 | | | |
| 17 | | | |
| 18 | | | |
| 19 | | | |
| 20 | | | |
| 21 | | | |
| 22 | | | |
| 23 | | | |
| 24 | | | |
| 25 | | | |

Page 84 1 CERTIFICATION 2 3 I, Sonya Ledanski Hyde, certified that the foregoing 4 transcript is a true and accurate record of the proceedings. 5 6 Sonya M. Shedarshi Hyd 7 Sonya Ledanski Hyde 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 Veritext Legal Solutions 21 330 Old Country Road 22 Suite 300 Mineola, NY 11501 23 24 25 Date: July 19, 2023

[& - 28] Page 1

| & | 10153 19:5 | 1st 49:5 | 23-01007 1:4 |
|----------------------------|------------------------|--------------------------------------|----------------------|
| & 4:8,12 5:9,20 | 10:01 2:22 | 2 | 23-01010 2:9 |
| 6:2,5 7:11,15 | 11 27:11 28:12 | | 8:5,9,14,19 9:1 |
| 7:20 10:3,13 | 28:22 30:4,21 | 2 4:15 39:18,19 | 23-01016 1:18 |
| 13:11,20 14:2 | 39:20 50:13 | 39:19,22 68:3 | 23-01190 2:1 |
| 14:15 27:9 | 11/1/2022 4:9 | 74:7 | 23rd 39:24 |
| | 4:22 5:16 6:6 | 2,000,000.00 | 40:5 |
| 70:23 72:1 | 7:7,16,21 | 5:17 | 24 50:1 |
| 76:16,18 80:10 | 111 14:17 | 2,195.04 5:17 | 2437 7:23 |
| 0 | 11501 84:23 | 2/28/2023 4:9 | 2446 7:17 |
| 0.00 4:10,23 | 1177 17:4 | 4:22 5:16 6:13 | 2452 6:20 |
| 0.00. 5:22 6:14 | 11:17 82:2 | 7:7,16,22 | 2455 4:10 |
| 1 | 12 9:4 83:7 | 20 33:6,19 | 2456 7:8 |
| 1 4:5,20 5:5,12 | 12/1/2022 6:13 | 34:16 39:23 | 2457 5:12 |
| 6:5,12 7:5,14 | 12151 84:7 | 83:5 200 13:22 | 2459 4:5 |
| 8:11 9:3 78:13 | 1221 14:4 | | 2462 6:14 |
| 1.5 44:7,9 | 12548 15:4 | 19:18 | 2463 6:7 |
| 10 8:12 74:5,14 | 1285 18:19 | 2004 52:8 | 2464 5:6 |
| 10/31/2022 | 1290 12:19 | 201 11:4 | 2465 4:23 |
| 5:21 | 13 9:4 | 2010 13:4 | 2466 5:17 |
| 10001 11:15 | 1384 19:11 | 2022 4:5,15,20 | 25 48:20,21 |
| 10004 2:19 | 14th 46:12 | 5:5,12 6:5,12 | 49:16,22,23 |
| 17:20 | 15 9:4 79:21 | 7:5,14 78:13 2023 2:21 4:5 | 51:14 55:19 |
| 10014 11:5 | 151 12:12 | | 250 12:4 |
| 10017 17:13 | 15th 15:11 | 4:16,21 5:6,12 | 2500 19:18 |
| 10018 12:5 | 16 8:12 39:22 | 6:5,12,20,20 7:6,15 78:14 | 2514 4:16 |
| 19:12 | 71:1 78:16 | 84:25 | 26th 40:5 |
| 10020 14:5 | 79:7 | 20th 18:12 | 27 8:17 |
| 10022 10:16 | 16th 40:5 | 40:5 | 2700 13:13 |
| 18:20 | 17 8:17 15:19 | 21202 13:5 | 2719 18:5 |
| 100281 16:5 | 55:22 81:24 | 2170 5:22 | 27th 39:25 |
| 10036 12:13 | 17,746.65. 7:22 | 21 70 3.22 22 8:17 | 40:5 |
| 16:20 17:5 | 18 2:21 78:12 | 22-10964 1:3 | 28 4:5,16,21 |
| 20:5 | 1846,2670,2 | 22-10904 1.3 225 16:4 | 5:6,12 6:12,20 |
| 10104 12:20 | 8:3 | 23 63:13 | 7:6,15 39:3,4 |
| 10111 18:13 | 19 84:25 | 23,000 63:13 | 78:14 |
| | | 64:6 69:24 | |
| | | ral Solutions | |

[2847 - accounts]

| 2847 46:15 | 4.7 30:10 | 690 57:2 | abi 42:25 |
|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| 2899,2967,2 | 400,000 7:8 | 7 | abigail 15:14 |
| 9:9 | 417,855.00 4:9 | 7 20:4 | ability 75:19 |
| 2967 50:18,22 | 42nd 12:12 | 7,194,758.50 | able 28:10 |
| 50:23 | 45 18:12 | 7:22 | 32:14 38:15 |
| 2975 78:16 | 46 83:5 | 7/13/2022 5:21 | 46:20 49:12 |
| 2978 9:14 | 4900 13:22 | 70 63:14 64:6 | 58:18 60:2,20 |
| 2979 9:14 | 49th 12:12 | 7301 16:12 | 64:17 81:11 |
| 2980 4:5,10,16 | 5 | 76,270.73. 7:8 | above 59:12 |
| 4:23 5:6,12,17 | 5 83:9 | 767 19:4 | abreu 23:8 |
| 5:22 6:7,14,21 | 500 18:4 | 778,680.00 | absence 75:18 |
| 7:8,17,23 | 510 32:1,25 | 5:21 | absolutely |
| 2982 9:14 | 33:2,9,18 34:1 | 7857 15:20 | 73:18 74:16 |
| 2984 9:14 | 34:17 35:6,6 | 78701 15:12 | accept 52:19 |
| 2nd 63:24 64:1 | 36:6 | 78711-2548 | 56:15,16 62:9 |
| 3 | 5100 14:17 | 15:5 | acceptable |
| 3 9:3 | 515 16:12 | 79 83:9 | 80:20 |
| 3,386,594.00 | 53597 15:21 | 7th 70:25 | acceptance |
| 4:23 | 53701 18:6 | 8 | 52:15 |
| 3/31/2023 6:6 | 55 11:14 | 8 6:20 8:12 9:3 | access 36:21 |
| 300 10:5 13:4 | 555 13:13 | 80 34:3,10 | 37:24 38:5 |
| 15:11 84:22 | 57th 16:12 | 81 33:7 34:14 | 54:12 |
| 3020 5:22 | 5:30 40:21 | 9 | accordance |
| 3032 8:3 | 6 | _ | 30:22 account 13:3 |
| 31 6:5 | 6 8:7,12 39:18 | 9 40:17 | 28:17,20 32:24 |
| 32 8:17 | 39:22 | 9,534,819.50 | 38:9 41:21,24 |
| 327 44:1 | 600 48:12 57:3 | 6:7 | 52:25 53:3,5 |
| 330 84:21 | 601 10:15 | 90071 13:14 | 54:12,18,19 |
| 33131 13:23 | 60606 14:18 | 9019 33:13 | 55:3 63:11,13 |
| 19:19 | 60654 10:6 | 51:10 62:10 | 63:17 64:8,13 |
| 33143 16:13 | 61,571.97. 7:17 | 906 19:11 | 64:14,16 65:9 |
| 36th 16:4 | 62 83:7 | 9:10 39:20 | 65:11,11,13 |
| 4 | 63,845.00 6:14 | a | 66:1,2,3,15 |
| 4 8:12 | 630 17:12 | a.m. 6:9,12 | 70:1,2,11 |
| 4,884,132.60 | 66,595.09. 6:7 | 39:20 40:17 | accounts 31:21 |
| 7:17 | | aaron 13:16 | 32:5,10 33:1 |
| | | 41:11 62:22 | , - |

Page 2

| | • | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 36:7 66:8 | adler 17:9,15 | agencies 27:22 | alaina 11:21 |
| accurate 60:24 | 57:13,13 80:9 | 28:19 | alex 21:1 |
| 84:4 | 80:9 81:2,5,12 | agenda 27:16 | alexander |
| achieve 70:4 | adler's 62:6 | 38:19 43:15,16 | 25:11 |
| acquisition | administered | 70:16 | ali 22:14 |
| 19:9,10 | 30:22 | agent 38:1 | allegations |
| action 40:18 | administrative | agree 30:8 32:7 | 28:13 |
| 67:4 68:17 | 36:21 | 42:11 44:2 | alleged 43:3 |
| actions 41:14 | admitted 50:22 | 56:5 65:8 | alleges 31:20 |
| 42:1 63:11 | admitting | 74:23 79:2 | 31:21 |
| active 37:8 | 50:21 | agreed 28:25 | allocated 56:8 |
| 75:18 | adopt 32:19 | 29:17 32:4,8 | 58:7 |
| activity 31:11 | 35:17 | 38:13 61:23 | allocation |
| actual 53:4 | adopted 79:4 | 73:7,9 80:2,13 | 49:16,24,25 |
| 65:3 | adrienne 18:15 | agreement | 56:12 |
| actually 37:19 | adv 1:4,18 2:1 | 29:5 30:3,10 | allow 33:6 |
| 50:1 55:14 | 2:9 | 38:16 42:17 | 65:16,16,25 |
| 59:5 67:2,5,20 | advance 45:17 | 51:7,9,10,21 | 72:12 |
| 70:8 72:7 | advanced 51:7 | 51:21 52:15,16 | allowance 7:12 |
| 75:22 77:25 | adversary 8:5 | 52:19 53:5 | 65:9 |
| 79:20 | 8:9,14,19 9:1 | 57:20,25 69:25 | allowing 45:6 |
| ad 1:12 8:5 | 69:11 79:24 | agreements | 57:15 |
| 13:3 80:10,18 | adverse 51:18 | 27:23 28:23 | allows 48:17 |
| adapt 71:10 | advice 52:18 | 31:4,9 37:23 | almeida 11:17 |
| add 57:4 75:24 | advise 59:24 | 38:17 | alternative |
| additional 52:7 | 81:2 | ahead 29:25 | 47:7 |
| 65:18 69:9 | advised 52:10 | 47:12 53:18 | alvarez 7:20 |
| 70:2 | advisor 4:3,19 | 69:18 74:2 | amelia 22:5 |
| additionally | 5:3 | aislinn 21:10 | amenable |
| 72:5 | advisory 4:1 | akin 7:10,15 | 40:17 |
| address 43:12 | affect 30:14 | 16:17 72:7,11 | amended 8:17 |
| 53:15 65:6 | 35:4 36:5 | 72:18 73:4,21 | 27:16 34:19 |
| 71:19 76:15,17 | 66:10 | al 1:15,20,23 | 38:21 45:11 |
| adjourned | affected 66:25 | 2:6,14 5:5 7:5 | 62:24 68:2 |
| 81:22 | aganga 12:22 | 8:6,9,10,15,15 | amending 30:6 |
| adjudicated | 51:4,4 53:8 | 8:20,20 9:2 | america 7:21 |
| 54:1,3 | 81:18,20,23 | | |
| | | 1014 | |

| americas 12:19 | appealed 47:21 | 73:15 75:8 | assume 41:4 |
|----------------|-----------------|--------------------|-----------------|
| 14:4 17:4 | 47:25 53:2 | 78:16 | assumed 60:21 |
| 18:19 | appeals 47:24 | approved | assuming |
| amount 44:9 | 53:11,13 | 29:14 39:7,11 | 39:10 |
| 53:22 55:23 | appear 45:6 | 47:9 50:16 | astronomical |
| 56:24 64:7,10 | 57:15 | 62:10 65:15,16 | 55:24 |
| 66:15 74:17 | appears 49:15 | 73:10,11 78:4 | atlas 16:10,11 |
| 75:6,8 | applaud 58:8 | 79:5,5 83:5,7,9 | attempt 65:3 |
| amounts 66:8 | 71:10 | approving 9:6 | attempted |
| analysis 58:7 | applicable | 9:12 52:22 | 64:11 |
| andersen | 29:14 | 53:9 63:18 | attention 72:8 |
| 17:10 25:24 | applicants | approximately | 72:9 |
| anderson 39:1 | 79:2 | 57:3 | attorney 15:2,9 |
| 57:13 | application 4:1 | area 35:25 | 41:18 |
| andrew 11:19 | 4:7,12,18 5:1,8 | argue 50:6 | attorneys 6:4 |
| 14:13,20 55:9 | 5:14,19 6:1,9 | argument 34:3 | 10:4,14 11:3 |
| angeles 13:14 | 6:16 7:1,10,19 | 36:8,8 | 11:12 12:3,11 |
| anne 24:8 | 70:16 74:5 | arguments | 12:18 13:3,12 |
| announced | 76:16 | 34:13 | 13:21 14:3,16 |
| 27:23 | applications | arie 12:15 | 15:3,10,17 |
| answer 42:4 | 71:1,12 76:12 | arising 73:16 | 16:3,11,18 |
| 71:2 | 78:8,13,17,18 | artur 23:8 | 17:3,10,18 |
| answered | 78:19 79:5,8,9 | asked 33:16 | 18:3,11,18 |
| 29:14 58:3,5,5 | 79:12 83:9 | 39:9,12,12 | 19:3,10,17 |
| answers 40:10 | appointed 71:8 | 49:25 62:24 | 20:3 73:4 |
| anticipated | appointment | 66:24 72:24 | auction 45:19 |
| 66:21 | 47:18 | 75:2 | august 63:24 |
| anybody 56:6 | appreciate | asserting 54:1 | 64:1 68:3 80:4 |
| 57:9 58:12 | 45:7 76:11 | 63:16 64:6 | austin 15:5,12 |
| 60:8 61:20 | 79:13,15 | assets 28:15 | authority |
| 68:13 71:22 | appropriate | 53:21,23 54:6 | 36:22,25 37:5 |
| 80:7 | 56:1 75:7 79:3 | 54:9,13 58:25 | authorized |
| apparently | approval 44:6 | 61:1 | 36:16 |
| 56:16 62:8 | 55:17 63:23,25 | assisted 28:9 | authorizing |
| appeal 59:8 | 71:1 73:15 | associated | 9:12 |
| 60:4 | approve 46:20 | 32:24 73:12 | available 41:5 |
| | 47:5 56:1 57:6 | | 52:1 61:7 |
| | | | |

[avenue - brett] Page 5

| avenue 10:15 | baltimore 13:5 | 80:10 | billion 30:11 |
|------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 12:19 14:4 | banker 7:3 | behavior 71:13 | 61:1 63:14 |
| | | | 64:6 |
| 17:4,12 18:19 | banking 15:10 | beitler 17:22 | |
| 19:4 67:22 | bankruptcy | belief 74:13 | binding 31:17 |
| avoid 37:12 | 1:1 2:17 3:3 | believe 29:7,20 | 34:23 42:7 |
| avoids 42:20 | 28:12 30:23,25 | 29:23 30:18 | birch 25:22 |
| 50:15 | 32:1 35:6 41:5 | 32:7,25 34:22 | biscayne 13:22 |
| aware 44:23 | 42:20 45:13 | 34:24 36:8 | 19:18 |
| b | 51:17 52:4 | 41:16,24 44:21 | biswas 23:12 |
| b 3:1 9:8 11:13 | 53:18 62:10 | 49:20 52:19 | bit 27:10 32:19 |
| 32:1,25 33:2,9 | 68:9 | 55:2 59:1,20 | 34:20 |
| 33:18 34:1,17 | bar 8:2 62:17 | 60:3,25 61:8 | bitcoin 36:3 |
| 35:6 36:6 | 63:13,19,20 | 61:13 62:9,16 | bjorn 25:24 |
| 44:15,18 47:14 | 64:1 68:2 72:3 | 65:24 68:25 | block 6:2,5 |
| 47:15,18 48:10 | 72:4,9 | 70:4,15 72:7 | 39:10 |
| 48:15,16,24 | barbosa 24:15 | 79:3 | blockchain 5:3 |
| 49:15,25 50:7 | barnes 23:10 | bellwether | board 15:10 |
| 1 | barse 24:7 | 64:11 | 46:18 |
| 50:25 51:8,12 | based 52:11 | ben 24:4 | body 66:23 |
| 51:19 52:6 | basis 44:21 | benefit 52:19 | borrower |
| 54:11 55:11 | 72:23 | 54:19 | 80:10 |
| 56:24 62:1,18 | baton 56:17 | benjamin 12:8 | borrowers |
| 62:19 79:9 | battery 17:19 | berg 23:7 | 1:12 8:6 |
| 83:7 | battle 58:20 | bernstein 16:8 | boulevard |
| back 34:11 | beaird 23:11 | best 56:21 58:2 | 13:22 19:18 |
| 42:21 44:4 | bear 40:3 | 67:22 | bound 50:6 |
| 46:18 64:19,21 | bearing 48:6 | beth 22:10 | 56:17 |
| 66:1 68:14 | becin 25:23 | better 77:10 | bourgeois |
| 74:7 81:6 | becky 21:21 | bid 45:19 47:6 | 25:21 |
| backup 9:13 | beginning | bidder 45:19 | bowling 2:18 |
| 43:17 44:6 | 71:11 77:4 | 47:1 83:5 | box 15:4,20 |
| 45:19,19 46:20 | begun 52:5 | big 78:24 | 18:5 |
| 46:25 47:6 | behalf 41:12 | | |
| 83:5 | 55:10 57:13 | bigger 39:9 billed 74:25 | bradley 22:21 bray 23:13 |
| ballot 39:6 | | 75:1 | braziel 22:25 |
| balloting 39:11 | 62:3,23 63:17 65:9 68:15 | | brett 13:9 |
| balluku 23:9 | | billing 71:13 | DIEU 15.9 |
| | 70:23 73:22,23 | | |
| | | | |

[breuder - chris] Page 6

| breuder 23:14 | callan 21:6 | cdp 12:3 55:12 | certify 65:8 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| brian 11:9 | called 41:17 | cebq 58:23 | cetera 77:11 |
| 20:16 23:10 | 67:8 | cede 41:8 | cftc 27:21 |
| bric 43:17,21 | cameron 22:24 | 62:20 70:18 | 28:11 29:1,10 |
| 44:15 45:15 | 25:17 | cel 31:24,25 | chambers |
| brief 75:9 | cap 74:8 | 32:12 33:3,6 | 38:24 40:11 |
| 79:23 | career 74:21 | 33:11,17 34:14 | 47:11 |
| briefly 53:4 | carl 25:18 | 35:4,5,24 36:7 | chang 23:17 |
| 69:20 71:9,21 | carol 22:11 | 43:11 44:15 | changes 59:2 |
| brifkani 23:15 | caroline 20:23 | cell 31:20 | 59:21 74:23,24 |
| bring 60:18,19 | 21:4 | celsius 1:8,15 | changing |
| 60:20,21 62:2 | carpenter 16:2 | 1:23 2:6,14 5:4 | 71:13 |
| brings 67:2 | carroll 23:16 | 7:4 8:6,10,15 | chapman |
| broad 43:8 | case 1:3,4,18 | 8:20 9:2 27:9 | 16:23 |
| broadway | 2:1,9 5:9 13:11 | 27:23 28:7,19 | chapter 27:11 |
| 19:11 | 13:20 14:2,15 | 29:3 31:5,5,10 | 28:11,22 30:4 |
| bronge 25:20 | 28:15 34:25 | 31:15 36:2 | 30:21 50:13 |
| brought 41:16 | 41:12,23 43:2 | 60:25 63:10 | charged 27:19 |
| 63:9,15 71:16 | 45:18 46:2,23 | 72:2,4,16 | 27:21 |
| 72:8,9 | 47:19 58:19 | 76:19 | charlotte 10:20 |
| bruh 11:8 | 69:2 71:17 | centerview | chart 34:8 43:3 |
| bryant 16:19 | 72:2,12 74:12 | 5:15 | 43:4,10 61:11 |
| bureau 16:3 | 74:12 75:6,15 | cents 33:7,8,20 | chase 24:17 |
| burks 26:7 | 77:5 78:11,24 | 34:3,10,16 | chen 12:24 |
| burnham 67:3 | cases 27:11 | ceo 34:14 | cherokee 19:9 |
| business 28:7 | 28:4,23 30:4 | certain 9:12 | 19:10 |
| 30:5 31:5,8,12 | 30:21 31:2,2 | 32:6 35:13 | chicago 10:6 |
| 36:2,3 50:15 | 45:18 47:17,23 | 51:18 57:25 | 14:18 |
| busy 72:11 | 67:9 75:14 | 58:1,23 66:6 | chief 36:12 |
| c | 78:7 | 78:17 | chock 31:14 |
| c 10:1 21:24 | cash 48:20 | certainly 31:6 | choice 56:20 |
| 27:1 84:1,1 | 51:14 | 33:16 36:9 | 56:22 |
| ca 13:14 | cashman 20:2 | 70:12 | choose 56:15 |
| caceres 25:19 | catching 67:23 | certification | chose 56:16 |
| calendars | catherine 22:4 | 8:2 | chris 24:10 |
| 80:24 | cautiously | certified 84:3 | 25:23 27:4,8 |
| | 38:14 | | 43:15 61:22 |
| | | L | |

| | - | | |
|---------------------|-----------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| 69:19 70:24 | 62:2,4,5 63:17 | cohen 23:21 | committee 4:4 |
| 71:3,8 79:22 | 64:6,18,25 | 36:11,17,24 | 4:14 5:4,11 |
| christiansen | 65:12,20,20,25 | colleagues | 6:19 7:4 9:7 |
| 23:18 | 66:1,7,16 | 68:20 75:24 | 12:18 13:12,21 |
| christopher | 69:21,24 71:15 | colloquy 37:22 | 14:3,16 27:25 |
| 10:8 18:3 | 71:15 73:16,20 | colodny 13:16 | 28:4 31:24 |
| 20:22 23:20 | 73:20,24 | 38:19 41:9,10 | 33:11 34:2 |
| 24:6,12 80:12 | claire 12:23 | 41:11,12 42:8 | 36:15,23 37:11 |
| church 23:1 | class 8:2 41:16 | 42:18 53:14,19 | 38:25 41:12,15 |
| circumstances | 53:25 63:9,15 | 53:20 54:16,22 | 42:3 47:19 |
| 45:10 46:23 | 63:18 64:4 | 62:20,21,22,23 | 48:16,25 49:5 |
| 47:4 52:11 | 65:8,9 66:9 | 63:3,4,5,7 64:5 | 50:25 51:2,6 |
| 73:16 75:4,5 | 67:4 68:17 | 68:4,11,12,19 | 51:11,18 52:10 |
| cirkel 23:19 | 69:2,15 | 69:1,17,20 | 52:18,18 56:11 |
| civil 27:22 | clear 28:20 | columbia | 62:23 63:15,22 |
| claim 32:2 | 30:10 37:4 | 39:21 | 66:13 69:25 |
| 53:25 63:9,14 | 43:6 44:3 47:4 | come 28:15 | 76:1 |
| 63:15,19 64:4 | 61:25 66:5 | 35:25 38:11 | committee's |
| 64:8,8,22 65:9 | 68:17 | 58:12,21 66:19 | 51:8 75:19 |
| 65:19,22 66:12 | clearly 60:13 | 79:25 | committees |
| 69:3 70:2 72:3 | 78:20 | comes 37:14 | 45:10 |
| 72:4,13,17 | clerks 78:20 | 64:21 67:17 | commodities |
| 73:2,13 | client 62:6 | coming 42:16 | 27:20 |
| claimants | clients 55:25 | 55:22 | common 70:11 |
| 53:24 54:5 | 57:3,21,24 | comment | community |
| 66:9 | close 47:9 | 75:10 76:13 | 11:12 55:10 |
| claims 28:24 | 63:20 79:25 | commentaries | company 17:18 |
| 28:25 32:23 | cnl 49:3 51:13 | 42:6 | 29:13,15,17 |
| 38:1 48:24 | 52:23 53:7,24 | commentary | 31:19 37:4,5,7 |
| 51:14,20,22 | 54:7,13,15,18 | 35:11 | 48:15 49:18 |
| 52:13 53:3,12 | 54:21,23 55:2 | commented | 50:15 59:11,11 |
| 53:17,25 54:1 | 55:3 61:5,5,7,8 | 33:15 46:21 | 61:2,11,12,18 |
| 54:6,10,24,24 | 61:9,10,11 | 76:5 78:7,10 | 61:25 |
| 55:1,5 58:22 | coco 23:20 | comments | company's |
| 58:24 59:1,3,4 | code 30:23,25 | 55:17 76:3 | 28:15 36:21 |
| 59:15 61:14,15 | 32:1 35:7 | commitment | 49:19 |
| 61:18,24,25 | | 41:20 44:6 | |
| | | | |

| compensate | concludes | consensual | consulting |
|-----------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|
| 28:22 | 50:24 | 27:23 33:12 | 4:19,21 44:5,5 |
| compensated | conclusion | 42:16,19 71:2 | 46:18 |
| 45:21 | 32:8 48:2 | 72:23 80:5 | consuming |
| compensation | concurrently | consensually | 64:12 70:9 |
| 4:2,8,13 5:2,9 | 68:24 | 42:14 | contemplated |
| 5:9,15,20 6:2 | conduct 75:20 | consent 29:1 | 69:1 |
| 6:10,17 7:2,13 | confer 40:9 | 29:12 | contest 32:15 |
| 7:20 | 79:24 | consenting 9:8 | contested |
| complain | conference 8:1 | 48:16,24 62:1 | 47:17 |
| 29:11 | 8:7,11,16,21 | consequences | context 74:6 |
| complaint 8:17 | 9:3 40:7 43:10 | 67:22 | continue 56:18 |
| 29:10 31:20 | 54:3 62:17 | consideration | 77:15 |
| 41:16 59:6 | conferences | 78:18 | continues |
| 80:18 | 79:19 | consolidate | 72:18 |
| complaints | confident 48:9 | 49:4,6 59:10 | continuing |
| 27:22 59:6 | confirmation | consolidated | 31:7 68:24 |
| 63:8 | 32:16 34:25 | 59:12 60:5,23 | 77:15 81:5 |
| complete 72:19 | 35:19 37:14 | 61:3 69:5,10 | contract 53:3 |
| completely | 39:2,5,10 | 80:13 | 53:12,25 63:16 |
| 56:5 | 40:12,13 46:24 | consolidating | 65:25 |
| complex 48:7 | 47:23 48:8,18 | 52:23 | contrary 46:22 |
| 61:17 | 67:1 68:8 | consolidation | control 72:19 |
| complexity | conflict 72:20 | 49:3 50:12 | conversations |
| 75:6 | conflicting | 51:13 53:1,7 | 74:4 |
| complicated | 80:23 | 53:18 54:4,20 | conveyed |
| 35:7 39:13 | conflicts 44:3 | 55:2 59:9 60:2 | 68:22 |
| comply 28:4 | 72:6 | constant 38:7 | convinced |
| complying | confusion | constituency | 67:21 |
| 30:24 | 30:11 | 75:21 | cooper 23:22 |
| compressed | connection | constitute | cooperated |
| 76:10 | 32:15 52:5 | 72:15 73:11 | 28:6 |
| con 34:14 52:6 | 69:8 71:12,18 | construct | cooperation |
| concerns 74:17 | 73:2,8,21 74:4 | 33:19 67:5 | 41:17 |
| concisely 68:18 | 74:24 75:3 | consultant | cooperatively |
| concluded 82:1 | consecutive | 43:21 | 28:19 |
| | 39:17,25 | | |
| | | | |

[coordinate - date]

| coordinate | 31:15,16,17 | 80:7,22 81:3 | crypto 43:1 |
|-----------------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 40:11 41:2 | 32:9,14,20 | 81:10,13,17,19 | 72:2 76:4 |
| cordry 23:23 | 33:3,15,22,25 | 81:21,24 | cryptocurren |
| cornell 11:7 | 34:7,17,21,23 | court's 35:7 | 36:4 |
| 44:25 45:3,4,5 | 35:5,9,11,15 | 47:24 53:1,11 | cryptocurrency |
| 46:1,6,8,14 | 35:18,21,22 | 55:16 59:14 | 53:23 |
| corporate | 37:7,25 38:4 | 63:18 | current 54:12 |
| 27:23 60:24 | 38:20,24 40:3 | courtney 26:7 | 61:12 72:24 |
| correct 54:16 | 40:16 41:3,7 | courtroom | currently |
| 54:21,22 73:18 | 41:10 42:5,7 | 38:25 55:12 | 63:19 68:24 |
| cost 48:1,6 | 42:12,15,24 | 58:15 60:9 | customer |
| 49:20,20 75:16 | 43:23 44:10,17 | 71:24 | 30:13,13 |
| costly 50:15 | 44:20,25 45:23 | cover 27:15 | customers |
| 70:9 | 46:4,7,10,17 | 36:10 | 42:21 52:15 |
| costs 73:12 | 47:12 50:3,20 | craig 19:21 | 58:22,24,25 |
| cote 25:18 | 50:21 51:2 | created 48:1 | 69:23 |
| counsel 4:14 | 52:2,22,24 | credibility | cut 36:23 73:9 |
| 5:10 6:6,11,18 | 53:13 54:11,14 | 75:24 | d |
| 7:11,16 16:18 | 54:17 55:6 | creditor 19:17 | d 15:23 20:15 |
| 51:15 57:11 | 56:1,6,23 57:1 | 53:17 58:14 | 20:22 23:11 |
| 72:1,2,6,20 | 57:4,6,7,9 | 66:22 | 26:6 27:1 83:1 |
| 76:11,15,19 | 58:11,15 59:13 | creditor's | d'amico 26:11 |
| 79:14 80:12 | 59:14,16,19,22 | 31:24 | dalhart 23:2 |
| country 84:21 | 59:24,24 60:6 | creditors 4:4 | damages 64:9 |
| couple 39:12 | 60:8,13,16,18 | 4:15 5:4,11 | 65:11,19 |
| 66:5 80:25 | 61:4,20 62:11 | 6:19 7:4 12:18 | dan 16:15 |
| course 27:24 | 62:11,21 63:4 | 13:12,21 14:3 | danial 60:10 |
| 28:13 30:8,23 | 63:6 64:3 | 14:16 30:4 | daniel 24:20 |
| 31:5,17 38:12 | 65:15,16 66:21 | 31:3 41:13,24 | danil 25:8 |
| 40:12 52:4,9 | 67:8 68:10,13 | 55:4 61:7 62:2 | darius 22:17 |
| 55:12 62:3 | 69:17 70:14,17 | 62:24 65:4 | data 36:22 |
| court 1:1 2:17 | 70:21 71:5,7,8 | 76:4 | date 8:2 31:6 |
| 16:12 27:2,6 | 71:20,24 73:14 | crews 25:17 | 34:4 44:8 |
| 27:12,17 29:4 | 73:25 74:2,18 | crimes 28:21 | 47:24 52:14 |
| 29:9,14,16,18 | 75:9 77:19,21 | critical 37:4 | 62:17 63:13,19 |
| 29:22,25 30:6 | 77:23,25 78:2 | 41:23 | 64:19,25 68:2 |
| 30:14,16 31:14 | 78:6,16 79:17 | | 72:3,4,9 80:21 |
| | | cal Calutions | , =.5, 1,5 00.21 |

[date - discuss] Page 10

| 04.25 | (0.4.72.(.7(.1 | d.1 | J: 05.16 |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 84:25 | 69:4 72:6 76:1 | delaware | diaz 25:16 |
| dates 39:1,2,14 | debtor's 8:16 | 61:10 | different 53:21 |
| 39:14,18 40:4 | debtors 6:11 | delay 47:23,23 | difficult 39:17 |
| 40:9 41:4 | 7:12,12 9:7,11 | 47:23 48:8 | 64:12 70:7,9 |
| 80:24 | 16:18 27:9,25 | delivered | 72:21 76:25 |
| david 14:7 | 30:21 34:3 | 75:16,21,22 | difiore 14:9 |
| 21:7 23:2 24:7 | 36:11,25 38:14 | democratic | 20:3 |
| 25:12 26:4 | 41:15,17 43:21 | 66:17 | digital 18:18 |
| 57:14 80:9 | 43:22 45:10 | denied 72:13 | diligence 45:16 |
| davies 23:24 | 47:16 48:5,9 | dennis 11:18 | dilute 28:25 |
| day 12:2 36:25 | 48:12,14,18,25 | dentzel 23:25 | 30:13 |
| 37:1,3,3 55:21 | 49:4 50:11 | department | diluted 28:16 |
| 62:13 67:19 | 51:11,15 53:21 | 11:2 15:16,17 | direct 54:24 |
| 74:22 79:18 | 54:7,9 61:25 | 27:19 | 58:22 61:24 |
| days 34:11 | 62:3 63:22 | deposition | 62:4,5 |
| 39:3,4 48:3 | 64:18 65:5,8 | 52:8 | directed 79:23 |
| 55:22 | 65:12,21 66:1 | depositions | directives 28:3 |
| de 26:10 | 66:9,14 69:3,9 | 48:3 52:5 | directly 54:15 |
| deadline 44:22 | december 6:12 | 55:22 | 61:2,5,10,12 |
| 46:12 49:7 | decide 33:25 | dept 15:10 | disagree 76:2 |
| deal 33:13 | 35:23 | deputy 38:25 | disclaimer |
| 44:11 45:17 | decision 31:16 | derivative 62:2 | 35:2 |
| 48:14 60:4 | 34:22 35:7,8 | describe 71:21 | disclosed 30:9 |
| 69:21 72:25 | 42:4 53:2 | described | disclosure 30:7 |
| dealing 33:23 | decisions 47:24 | 73:17 | 33:23 34:12 |
| 72:22 | 47:25 | despite 56:10 | 37:13 38:21 |
| deals 62:14 | declaration | determine | 39:4,6,10 |
| dealt 71:11 | 50:17,21 | 32:12 57:21 | 42:24 59:9 |
| dean 16:23 | deduction 75:2 | deutsch 16:2 | 62:24 65:1,15 |
| deanna 39:1 | 75:2 | devastated | 66:14 67:1 |
| deborah 25:9 | defendants | 63:12 | 68:8 |
| debt 19:9,10 | 1:16,24 2:7,15 | developments | discount 73:11 |
| 54:25,25 | 27:24 67:9 | 31:15 | discovery 52:8 |
| debtor 1:10 | defer 78:18 | deverick 24:14 | discuss 34:17 |
| 10:4,14 31:25 | deferral 76:15 | dialogue 37:8 | 34:20 43:5 |
| 32:4,15 34:8 | deferred 79:10 | 37:11,17 38:8 | 53:4 74:3 |
| 37:10,17 55:24 | | 76:21 77:13 | 76:23 |
| | | 1014 | |

| discussed | 7:8,17,22 8:2,7 | dzaran 24:2 | effort 64:10 |
|------------------------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|
| 31:23 63:22 | 8:11,17 9:3,9 | e | efforts 56:10 |
| 74:6 | 9:13 | e 3:1,1 10:1,1 | 58:8 |
| discussion 81:7 | docket 37:24 | 27:1,1 83:1 | ehrler 20:11 |
| discussions | 45:9 46:8 | 84:1 | eisenberger |
| 33:10 68:18 | 50:18 | eades 24:4 | 17:7 |
| 76:20 77:16 | dockets 29:19 | earlier 37:21 | either 28:1 |
| dismiss 8:11,16 | document | 50:4 53:1 75:5 | 31:8 37:13 |
| 9:3 80:18 | 46:10 52:8 | early 38:22 | 55:4 73:22 |
| dismissed | documentary | 47:19 63:2 | 76:14 |
| 30:21 | 52:3 | 74:6 76:20 | elected 28:2 |
| dispute 47:15 | documents | 80:19 | elementus 5:1 |
| 48:23 49:12,13 | 28:8 44:4 | earn 13:3 | 5:6 |
| 49:24 56:7 | doing 30:24 | 31:21 32:5,10 | elimelech 24:3 |
| 66:7 77:14,15 | 46:11 | 32:13,16,24 | eliminated |
| disputed 65:22 | doj 28:10 | 33:1 36:7 | 28:17 |
| 66:1 | 36:11 37:8 | 52:25 53:2,4 | elizabeth 10:18 |
| disputes 48:1 | 75:17 | 53:24 54:5,18 | 17:22 |
| 56:6 | dollars 61:1 | 54:19 55:3 | ellis 10:3,13 |
| distribute | don 20:25 | 61:13 | 27:9 72:1 |
| 64:20 66:2 | donald 21:25 | east 13:4 18:4 | elsberg 6:17 |
| distributed | doubt 47:3 | easy 38:4 | 12:17 51:5 |
| 36:14 64:23 | dow 25:15 | ecf 50:22,23 | email 36:22 |
| distribution | dozen 42:6 | 78:16 | emails 80:15 |
| 65:2,21 | dozens 48:3 | echo 41:15 | emergence |
| distributions | drag 69:24 | 55:17 63:9 | 48:8 |
| 30:4 31:3 65:4 | drawing 46:18 | 69:20 | emergency |
| 69:23 | drawn 45:20 | eckhardt 24:5 | 47:23 59:13 |
| district 1:2 | drew 24:1 | ecro 3:5 | eminent 50:15 |
| 31:16 35:7 | drexel 67:3,3 | ed 25:22 | engage 31:10 |
| 41:18 59:14,16 | drive 14:17 | effect 30:3 31:2 | engaged 31:6 |
| 59:24 | duffy 14:10 | 34:22 35:3 | 33:10 36:1,2 |
| dla 19:16 | 24:1 | 37:16 66:16 | 48:13 68:23 |
| dob 15:3 | dunn 55:14 | effective 64:19 | engel 25:13 |
| doc 4:5,10,16 | dunne 11:18 | 64:25 | english 53:16 |
| 4:23 5:6,12,17 | dymon 25:14 | effects 63:11 | 80:10 |
| 5:22 6:7,14,20 | | 03.11 | |
| | | rol Colutions | |

| | 31 | | C |
|-----------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| enjoyable 78:8 | 72:9 73:12,23 | examiners | expense 44:7,7 |
| enormous 48:1 | estates 47:16 | 75:13,13 76:8 | 45:13,16 56:10 |
| 55:20 | 48:2,12 51:13 | 78:10 | 75:10 |
| enter 28:25 | 52:23 54:5,7 | example 54:14 | expenses 4:3 |
| 56:19 | estimate 65:3 | 75:23 | 4:10,14,23 5:3 |
| entered 29:2,7 | et 1:15,20,23 | examples 47:5 | 5:10,17,21 6:3 |
| 31:9 50:23 | 2:6,14 5:4 7:5 | exceed 44:9 | 6:7,10,14,18 |
| enters 56:20 | 8:6,9,10,15,15 | 50:1 | 7:3,8,14,17,22 |
| entirely 54:22 | 8:20,20 9:2 | exceeded 49:22 | 9:12 57:18 |
| entities 49:5,6 | 77:11 | exceedingly | 79:5,8 |
| 53:22 55:4 | ethereum 36:4 | 78:23 | expensive |
| 59:10,12,15 | evening 40:19 | exceeds 56:8 | 64:13 75:14,23 |
| 60:4 61:9,15 | event 47:7 | exceptions | experience |
| 76:20 | everybody | 66:6,10 | 67:2 |
| entitle 33:18 | 36:9,13 37:24 | excess 61:1 | explanation |
| entitled 47:3 | 37:25 38:4 | exchange | 53:16 |
| 48:11 54:6 | 81:21 | 51:13 | extent 42:12,13 |
| entitlement | everyone's | excusable | 42:17 54:17,18 |
| 47:15 | 72:8 | 72:15 | 54:23 56:14 |
| entity 54:14 | evidence 50:19 | excuse 54:18 | 64:17 |
| 60:23 | 50:21,22,23 | 77:4 | extraordinary |
| entry 9:6,11 | exactly 28:5 | excused 70:21 | 75:11 76:10 |
| equitable | 30:24 68:21 | 77:22 81:18,21 | extremely 45:9 |
| 70:10 | examined | exhibit 79:7,7 | ezra 26:11 |
| equitably | 40:22 | 79:9 | f |
| 69:22 | examiner 4:19 | existence 30:20 | f 3:1,5 11:18 |
| equity 47:18 | 6:2,4 18:3 | exit 28:12 | 13:18 84:1 |
| 51:20 55:1,5 | 41:15 43:2 | expanded 76:7 | fabsik 19:7 |
| 56:11 | 63:10 70:23,25 | expect 30:23 | face 56:23 |
| erik 24:16 | 71:9 74:14 | 31:1 38:21 | 76:23,23 |
| ernst 4:8 5:20 | 75:10,15,19,22 | 39:25 40:10 | fact 32:12 |
| especially | 75:23 76:13 | 51:23 80:5 | 34:15 65:1 |
| 45:13 | 78:15 | expected 30:3 | facts 32:7,9,11 |
| essentially | examiner's | 37:5 44:9 | 52:11 |
| 53:6 80:17 | 34:5,7 43:4 | expended | fahey 25:12 |
| estate 45:13 | 52:2 70:8 76:6 | 55:23 | failing 47:8 |
| 64:13 65:21 | 78:22 79:1,6 | | |
| | | | |

| fair 56:12 | 50:1 56:8,9,13 | finally 59:7 | floor 12:12 |
|------------------------|-------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| 73:14 | 73:1,10,15 | financial 4:3 | 16:4 18:12 |
| fairly 61:17 | 79:5,8 | 4:19 15:17 | florence 25:10 |
| 67:17 69:22 | feld 7:11,16 | financially | flow 55:2 |
| 76:10 | 16:17 | 58:4 | 61:11 |
| fairness 56:7 | felt 75:7 | find 29:22 65:6 | flower 13:13 |
| faith 65:3 | ferguson 3:5 | 66:9 | flows 61:5,6 |
| fall 27:25 74:7 | fernandez | finder 32:12 | follow 31:10 |
| false 59:4 | 25:11 | findings 52:14 | foregoing 84:3 |
| fan 75:13 | ferraro 50:17 | 52:17 56:19 | forensics 5:3 |
| 78:10 | 50:21 | finds 64:21 | formally 36:20 |
| far 22:14 77:6 | fifth 19:4 | fine 67:11 | forth 34:5 79:6 |
| fast 41:5 67:22 | figure 41:1 | fines 28:16,24 | forward 36:5 |
| faster 66:3 | figures 73:7 | 38:11 | 42:1 46:24 |
| faucher 19:14 | file 37:23 44:15 | finish 29:25 | 50:12 |
| favor 57:9 | 46:7,10 63:23 | finished 40:22 | fought 55:20 |
| feasible 58:4 | 63:25 72:4,11 | 40:23 | 58:10,20 |
| february 4:5 | 72:17 | firm 51:22 | found 29:11 |
| 4:16,21 5:5,12 | filed 5:6 27:16 | 72:15,16,22 | 41:15 63:10 |
| 6:12,20 7:6,15 | 29:19,21,24 | firms 51:17 | fourth 72:22 |
| 77:3,4,5 78:14 | 41:14 44:11,23 | 71:10 73:6,7 | frankel 17:2 |
| federal 37:8,15 | 45:2,8 46:13 | first 4:12 5:19 | 25:9 |
| 37:18 38:9,15 | 46:15 49:4,5 | 6:9,16 11:12 | frankly 77:12 |
| 75:17 | 49:11 50:17 | 27:18 39:14 | fraud 27:20,20 |
| fee 4:1,9,12,18 | 53:25 57:23 | 41:4 43:16 | 27:20 63:16 |
| 4:22 5:16,21 | 59:13 62:20 | 54:25 55:10 | 64:9 70:2,6 |
| 6:7,14 7:1,8,10 | 63:13 66:13,14 | 57:22,23 58:19 | fred 80:12 |
| 7:17,22 18:3 | 69:3 70:25 | 71:12 74:10 | free 50:9 56:15 |
| 44:7 47:2 | 73:13 78:15 | 75:11 | 65:14 70:5,12 |
| 70:16,23,25 | filing 59:9 | fishberg 60:8 | fresh 35:1 |
| 71:1,9,12 74:4 | 63:18 72:3,12 | 72:8 | friday 43:1 |
| 76:12,16 78:7 | 73:2 80:17 | fit 39:8 | 44:22 |
| 78:10,12,15,22 | filings 52:2 | five 33:17 | frishberg |
| 79:1,4,6 83:9 | filled 31:14 | fl 13:23 16:13 | 24:20 25:8 |
| fees 9:12 43:17 | final 29:5 40:7 | 19:19 | 49:10 60:10,11 |
| 44:5,11 45:14 | finalized 29:6 | flannigan | 60:14,17,20 |
| 45:18 46:18 | | 25:10 | 61:8 |
| | | | |

| | | I | 1 |
|------------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| front 35:2 | generated | godfrey 18:2 | greater 64:17 |
| 73:13 | 47:24 | 70:23 | greatest 56:13 |
| ftc 27:21 28:11 | geoffrey 23:19 | goes 39:11 | green 2:18 |
| 29:2,11 30:10 | georgia 10:20 | 67:25 | greg 22:16 |
| 59:6 61:18 | georgiou 1:20 | going 30:9 | gregory 13:18 |
| full 42:24 59:8 | 8:9 80:13 | 32:19 34:19 | 21:12 |
| 74:18 79:4 | geremia 12:7 | 35:22 36:3,5 | ground 33:9 |
| fullest 42:17 | getting 41:18 | 39:3 40:17,19 | group 1:12 8:5 |
| fully 28:4,5 | 64:5 77:14 | 43:25 44:25 | 11:12 13:3 |
| 29:3 30:9,22 | gheorghe | 48:21 49:2 | 80:11 |
| 47:20 48:17 | 22:17 | 54:2 57:18 | grove 16:10,11 |
| 58:18 60:23 | giant 75:13 | 61:11 62:11,17 | grover 22:23 |
| 61:15 73:22 | 78:10 | 64:7,9,12,18 | grzegorz 25:14 |
| funded 48:21 | giardiello | 66:10,17 67:11 | guess 31:17 |
| 54:25,25 | 22:21 | 78:6 81:6 | 33:20,22 34:2 |
| funds 41:21 | give 27:2,6 | good 27:4,8 | 37:10 38:1,25 |
| 64:20,22 66:2 | 39:13 40:9,24 | 41:11 55:9 | 45:23 78:3 |
| further 45:2,21 | 51:24 57:25 | 60:10 65:3 | gump 7:10,15 |
| 46:7,10 78:5 | 66:21 68:19 | 68:14 70:22 | 16:17 72:7,18 |
| 81:15 | 70:11 | 71:6,7 76:6 | guthrie 22:24 |
| future 45:18 | given 28:13 | 80:9 | h |
| 47:25 58:1 | 38:14 74:18 | gornitzky 4:12 | h 20:19 |
| g | 75:4,21 | gorrepati | half 42:6 |
| g 25:3,22 27:1 | gk8 48:22 59:3 | 22:22 | hall 25:6 |
| gabriel 17:7 | 59:4 61:18 | gotshal 19:2 | hancock 70:22 |
| gallagher 25:7 | glad 58:19,21 | government | 70:23 78:5 |
| garrison 18:17 | glenn 3:2 | 8:1 28:6 38:11 | 79:15 |
| gate 63:20 | global 67:4 | 41:13 63:8 | hand 48:25 |
| gay 6:17 12:17 | go 29:25 34:11 | 76:20 | 49:1 64:8 |
| 51:5 | 36:5 40:22 | government's | handagama |
| geary 23:3 | 47:12 50:12 | 41:20 | 25:5 |
| gemini 17:18 | 53:18 61:14 | grant 50:9 | hannan 25:4 |
| general 15:2,9 | 64:8 67:11 | 62:12 | happen 42:1 |
| 51:25 55:4 | 69:17 74:2 | granted 62:15 | 64:4 |
| generally | 79:12,20 | granting 9:9 | happened |
| 80:16 | goals 42:22 | 9:13 | 28:18 47:5 |
| 00.10 | | | 77:10 |
| | | ral Calutions | 11110 |

[happy - hybrid]

Page 15

| happy 42:4 | 81:9 | hold 57:3 | 50:5,24 51:3,5 |
|-------------------|-----------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| 46:20 50:18 | hearings 40:19 | 64:18,19 66:1 | 51:5,16,16,23 |
| 53:20 71:2 | heightened | 77:25 | 51:24 53:8,20 |
| 76:17 | 70:6 | holder 50:7 | 54:22 55:9,16 |
| haqqani 13:25 | heine 11:21 | 56:16 65:13 | 56:4,19,19,25 |
| hard 55:20 | held 53:21,23 | 66:15 | 57:5,8 58:17 |
| 58:10 | 54:13,21 61:5 | holders 9:8 | 59:17 60:1,10 |
| hardest 42:18 | helioti 22:20 | 11:13 13:3 | 61:19,23 62:16 |
| harm 64:16 | help 28:11 | 28:17,20 33:11 | 62:22,24 63:5 |
| harrison 22:18 | 77:11 | 33:19 38:9 | 64:2,5,21 |
| hatcher 22:19 | hendrickson | 41:21,25 47:15 | 66:20 68:4,14 |
| hauer 7:11,15 | 25:3 | 47:18 48:16 | 69:14,19 70:20 |
| 16:17 | heras 26:10 | 49:15,25 51:12 | 70:22,24 71:6 |
| heading 62:19 | herrmann 25:2 | 51:19,20 52:7 | 73:19 76:18 |
| hear 38:18 | 49:10 58:13,14 | 52:25 53:3,5 | 78:5 79:15,22 |
| 42:22 51:2 | 58:14,16,17 | 54:12,19 55:3 | 80:9,20 81:5 |
| 56:4 57:10 | 59:17,20,23 | 55:7,14 61:13 | 81:12,16 |
| 67:16 81:14 | 60:1,6,7,22 | 62:1 63:12,13 | honor's 53:24 |
| heard 44:3 | 61:17,23 | 63:17 64:9,13 | 63:23,25 |
| 51:1 55:7,8 | hershey 13:17 | 64:14,16 65:10 | hope 40:12 |
| 57:12 58:12 | high 45:14 | 65:11 66:2,3 | 57:15 62:25 |
| 61:20 68:13 | higher 57:18 | 70:1,11 | 69:8,12 |
| 69:7 71:5 80:8 | 70:4 74:25 | holds 54:7,8 | hopeful 38:16 |
| hearing 4:1,7 | hill 23:4 | 61:1 | 68:6 |
| 4:12,18 5:1,8 | hire 70:9 | holidays 80:4 | hopefully |
| 5:14,19 6:1,9 | hired 72:6 | hon 3:2 | 77:14 81:8 |
| 6:16 7:1,10,19 | historic 36:2 | honor 27:4,8 | horse 45:14 |
| 8:1,5,9,14,19 | historical 28:7 | 27:10,14 29:24 | howey 31:22 |
| 9:1,6,11 31:23 | 31:4,11 37:2 | 30:2,9 31:13 | hubbard 17:17 |
| 33:16 36:19 | hittelman 25:1 | 32:6,18 34:20 | hudson 11:14 |
| 37:14,14 39:2 | hoc 1:12 8:5 | 35:1,17 37:21 | huge 28:16 |
| 39:3,5,10,21 | 13:3 80:10,18 | 38:23 40:2 | 38:11 66:22 |
| 40:6,12,14 | hodson 24:25 | 41:11 42:3,9 | hughes 17:17 |
| 43:18,20 44:14 | hoffman 17:10 | 43:14,20 44:14 | hurley 16:22 |
| 46:21 68:8,24 | 57:14 | 44:16 45:4,8 | huron 4:18,21 |
| 79:21,23 80:1 | holcomb 24:24 | 45:22 46:1,6 | hybrid 7:19 |
| 80:2,14,19 | | 46:14 47:10,13 | 8:11,16 9:3 |
| | Veriteyt I ed | 1211 | |

[hyde - issues] Page 16

| hdo 0.25 04.2 | in and like (4.7 | ingida: 240 | 75.20.76.7 |
|--------------------------|---------------------|-----------------|---------------------|
| hyde 9:25 84:3 | incredible 64:7 | insider 34:9 | 75:20 76:7 |
| 84:8 | incremental | institutions | investigations |
| i | 65:10 | 15:18 | 28:5,6,9 37:3 |
| idea 35:18 | incurred 6:4 | instructed 28:1 | investisseme |
| 40:24 73:24 | 6:11 49:21 | insurance 59:4 | 55:13 |
| identify 81:19 | indicated | intend 42:10 | investment 7:3 |
| ignat 12:11 | 43:20 | 62:13 63:23 | 17:10 57:14,14 |
| 68:15 | indicted 27:18 | 66:16,18 | investments |
| ii 9:8 | 36:12 | intense 55:18 | 12:3 53:23 |
| il 10:6 14:18 | indictment | intention 68:7 | investors 11:12 |
| illegal 31:11 | 29:10 36:11,13 | intents 77:2 | 55:11 |
| immanuel 25:2 | 36:14,15 | interest 27:13 | involve 36:3 |
| 58:14 | indirectly | 43:8 | 48:23 |
| immediately | 54:15 | interested 19:3 | involved 74:11 |
| 36:16,16,23 | indiscernible | 19:17 31:18 | 76:19 |
| impact 34:24 | 34:10 45:5,9 | 35:21 37:18 | island 43:1 |
| 52:25 53:4,16 | 47:12 57:16,17 | 76:3 | isolated 77:3 |
| implement | 57:18,22,23,24 | interesting | israel 36:19 |
| 48:15 49:2 | 57:25 58:7 | 45:24 46:1 | israeli 4:14 |
| implements | 61:18 69:13 | interim 4:1,7 | 36:19 |
| 49:8 | individualized | 4:12,18 5:1,8 | issue 32:2 |
| importance | 73:24 | 5:14,19 6:1,9 | 33:12,16,23,25 |
| 47:6 | individuals | 6:16 7:1,10,19 | 34:2,12,18 |
| | 70:7 | 71:12 78:14 | 35:4,6,22,25 |
| important 30:15 46:25 | indulgence | internal 36:22 | 36:6 40:16,25 |
| 47:2 68:22 | 27:15 | 37:3 | 47:17 49:24 |
| 76:2 | inform 63:21 | international | 53:18 57:24 |
| | informal 44:23 | 17:3 | 62:13 68:2 |
| impose 66:12 | information | interns 78:20 | 69:11 71:18,21 |
| include 28:24 | 37:2 52:1 | interrupt | 71:25 72:25 |
| 61:23 | 57:20 77:9 | 42:13 | 73:21 76:15 |
| included 34:7 | informationa | interviews | issues 31:23 |
| 51:19,25 59:5 | 69:14 | 28:8 | 33:6,7 37:9 |
| includes 30:10 | initial 9:8 | investigating | 42:13,16 43:7 |
| including 4:20 | 33:20 48:16,24 | 51:19,22 52:1 | 43:12 44:2 |
| 7:15 | 62:1 63:13 | investigation | 48:7,19 55:21 |
| increase 30:12 | 65:2 | 51:24 52:9,13 | 60:3 62:18 |
| | 77 '4 4 7 | , | |

[issues - kramer] Page 17

| | T | | I |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| 69:7 73:5 76:6 | joined 31:25 | katherine 18:8 | 59:1,3 67:1,13 |
| 76:23,24,24 | joining 55:15 | kaufmann | 67:16,21 68:19 |
| 77:1,3,6,18 | joins 51:6 | 20:12 | 68:23 74:7 |
| 78:25 80:3 | joint 9:6 80:1,2 | kayla 12:24 | 75:16,25 76:4 |
| item 43:16 | jon 22:19 | keely 21:10 | 76:14 79:7,17 |
| j | jonathan 21:9 | keeney 21:11 | 79:18 80:25 |
| j 20:14 23:2 | jones 10:18 | keep 68:8 | 81:1 |
| 24:14,24 25:18 | 12:2 | keeping 58:25 | known 52:11 |
| 25:21 | josemar 24:15 | keith 14:8,11 | knows 51:17 |
| jack 23:6 | joseph 21:15 | ken 18:22 | koenig 10:8 |
| jakobsen 22:13 | 24:13 25:3 | 20:11 | 27:4,5,7,8,9,13 |
| jam 79:18 | joshi 24:22 | kevin 22:9,12 | 27:18 29:7,12 |
| jama 23:7 | jovanni 20:20 | key 41:18 | 29:17,20,23 |
| jama 25.7 james 25:13 | joyce 13:7 | 42:16 48:19 | 30:2,8,15,17 |
| james 23.13 jamshid 22:14 | jr 17:10 57:14 | keyan 20:18 | 32:6,11,18,21 |
| janishid 22.14 janell 24:5 | judge 3:3 67:6 | khai 23:5 | 33:5,21 34:5 |
| janke 24:23 | 67:7,8,16,17 | khanuja 24:21 | 34:13,19 35:1 |
| • | 71:3 72:13 | kieser 21:12 | 35:10,13,16,19 |
| jankovic 24:23 | 73:13 81:6,18 | kind 60:11 | 35:24 37:21 |
| january 6:20 | judgment | 73:20 77:14 | 38:3,6,22 40:2 |
| jared 25:4 | 30:11,20 31:1 | kirkland 10:3 | 40:11 41:1,4,8 |
| jasleigh 23:3 | 50:15 | 10:13 27:9 | 42:2 43:14,15 |
| jason 13:8 21:18 23:11 | july 2:21 46:12 | 72:1,11 73:4,8 | 43:25 44:13,19 |
| | 70:25 84:25 | 73:21 77:1,5 | 44:21 47:10,13 |
| jean 21:16 | justice 11:2 | 77:10 80:15 | 50:5,24 51:3,6 |
| jeff 22:2 68:15 | 15:16 27:19 | know 27:10 | 55:18 56:5 |
| jeffrey 16:8 | 41:19 | 29:8,9,13 | 61:21,22,22 |
| jellestad 22:15 jenner 6:2,5 | k | 33:22,24 35:17 | 62:16,25 63:2 |
| 74:5 | | 37:14,16 38:12 | 69:19,19 70:15 |
| | kaczkowski | 38:18 39:8 | 70:18 79:20,22 |
| jeremy 23:4 | 22:16 | 40:13 41:13 | 79:22 81:13,15 |
| jersey 16:3 | kahn 18:2 | 42:9,13,14 | koenig's 68:6 |
| jesse 24:11 | 70:23 | 43:17 47:8 | koster 21:13 |
| 25:6 | kaila 16:24 | 50:25 53:16,21 | kouly 21:14 |
| job 72:24 78:8 | kaitlyn 25:1 | 54:8 57:22,22 | kraig 22:13 |
| johan 25:20 | kaplan 16:15 | 57:23 58:2,4,6 | kramer 17:2 |
| john 21:20 | karen 23:23 | 58:8,20,24 | |
| 24:2,25 26:1 | | | |

[kuhns - luc] Page 18

| | | -0 ((0 1 0 | |
|------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| kuhns 13:7 | leading 34:10 | 58:6 62:12 | 54:21 55:3 |
| kulpreet 24:21 | learned 36:12 | line 45:20 83:4 | 61:1 |
| kurman 13:2 | learning 36:15 | lines 75:4 | llc's 61:7 |
| kwasteniet | leave 36:21 | liquid 53:22 | llp 4:8 5:9,20 |
| 10:11 | leaves 37:9 | lisa 19:14 | 6:2,6 7:11,16 |
| kyle 23:13 26:3 | leblanc 11:19 | listen 67:10 | 10:3,13 11:11 |
| l | 55:8,9,10 | listening 66:20 | 12:10 13:11,20 |
| 1 21:25 22:23 | 56:25 57:2,5,8 | litigate 48:19 | 14:2,15 16:2 |
| 26:9 | lectern 41:8 | litigated 47:20 | 16:17 17:2,17 |
| la 10:5 | 62:20 70:18 | 56:10 | 18:10,17 19:2 |
| laboring 77:6 | ledanski 9:25 | litigating 48:7 | 19:16 20:2 |
| lackey 24:12 | 84:3,8 | 49:18 | lodge 56:4 |
| laid 71:11 | lee 21:17 24:6 | litigation 7:11 | lombard 13:4 |
| lalana 22:7 | left 65:19 | 16:18 29:3 | long 40:8 58:20 |
| lalia 21:15 | legal 6:9,13 | 36:9 42:21 | 66:3 74:3 |
| language 49:12 | 32:8 53:21 | 47:22 48:2,5,9 | look 35:5 37:19 |
| large 42:1 | 84:20 | 48:17 49:17 | 42:5 66:22 |
| 66:12 75:14 | lehrfeld 24:13 | 50:16 51:11 | 74:3 |
| las 26:10 | lending 60:25 | 52:6 53:10 | looking 73:1 |
| late 40:18 43:9 | 61:9 | 54:11,11 56:18 | 80:17,19 |
| 44:11 72:13 | length 43:18 | 56:18 57:18 | los 13:14 |
| 73:2,13 81:25 | leonard 16:7 | 58:1 65:14 | lost 48:6 |
| latham 76:16 | levin 17:2 | 67:4 72:18,19 | lot 30:11 35:11 |
| 76:18 77:3 | levy 28:16 | litigations | 35:15 42:2 |
| 78:19 79:9 | 38:11 | 55:18 | 43:9 45:12 |
| latrielle 21:16 | lexington | little 32:19 | 46:2 63:12 |
| law 17:9 31:10 | 10:15 | 34:20 39:13 | 71:13 74:10,20 |
| 36:19 52:12 | liberty 16:4 | 42:22 | 74:21 76:4 |
| 53:18 72:15,16 | light 53:1 | live 74:16 | 78:21 81:7,7 |
| 72:22 73:6 | 56:18 | llc 1:8,15,23 | loud 44:3 |
| lawyer 67:3 | likely 27:14 | 2:6,14 4:19,21 | lower 73:7 |
| 70:10 | 28:24 35:22 | 5:4,15 6:10,13 | 75:1 |
| lawyers 60:18 | 42:9 47:25 | 7:5,21 8:6,10 | lp 4:2 7:2,6 |
| layla 15:7 | 48:7,11 65:20 | 8:15,20 9:2 | 18:18 |
| lays 34:13 | limit 40:24 | 19:9 49:3 | lu 21:18 |
| lead 32:12 | limited 17:3 | 51:13 52:23 | luc 23:21 |
| 68:16 72:1 | 57:10,11,19 | 53:3,7,17,25 | |
| | X7 ' T | 1 | |

[lucas - mira] Page 19

| lucas 24:24 | malpractice | matters 32:22 | metzger 55:11 |
|--------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|-----------------------|
| luck 56:21 | 73:20 | 51:18 | mevin 24:22 |
| lucy 26:9 | man 70:20 | matthew 20:7 | mg 1:3,4,18 2:1 |
| luke 10:9 | management | maude 20:19 | 2:9 8:5,9,14,19 |
| lund 24:11 | 18:18 63:11 | maunder 22:11 | 9:1 |
| lupu 21:19 | manges 19:2 | mccarter 80:10 | mia 23:22 |
| ly 21:20 | manipulation | mccarthy | miami 13:23 |
| m | 34:4 43:4 | 22:12 | 16:13 19:19 |
| m 9:13 10:11 | mantra 41:23 | mcelroy 16:2 | michael 15:23 |
| | 66:3 | mcintyre 24:14 | 26:2 |
| 11:19 20:12 22:9 26:5 | manus 22:9 | md 13:5 | mid 63:5 |
| m3 4:1 | march 6:5 | meadow 10:20 | middle 33:9 |
| maciej 22:6 | maria 22:20 | mean 37:17 | milbank 11:11 |
| made 28:14,20 | mark 11:8 | 38:24 40:19 | 55:10 |
| 58:23 59:4,21 | 14:12 70:22 | 42:5 66:23 | milken 67:3 |
| 73:9 | market 34:4,9 | 67:13 | milligan 15:7 |
| madison 15:21 | 43:3 | means 30:12 | million 44:7,9 |
| 18:6 | marketed 59:5 | 56:16 64:24 | 48:12,20,21 |
| madsen 21:21 | maronpot | media 30:12 | 49:16,22,23 |
| mailing 39:7 | 22:10 | mediation | 50:1 51:14 |
| main 15:19 | marques 24:15 | 60:21 68:23 | 57:2,3 74:5,7 |
| 18:4 42:22 | marsal 7:20 | 69:8,13 | 74:14 |
| 67:9 | marsh 24:17 | meet 79:24 | milton 67:6 |
| majority 54:8 | martin 3:2 | meeting 76:21 | mind 67:2 |
| 54:8 | mary 21:22 | 76:22 77:17 | mineola 84:23 |
| make 30:17 | mashinsky | meetings 73:4 | mining 36:3 |
| 38:10 39:14 | 27:18,21,24 | melanie 11:20 | 54:15,16,19,21 |
| 43:6 47:3 | 28:1 41:14 | members | 54:23,24 55:1 |
| 56:13,14 66:5 | 63:10 | 52:10 | 55:5 59:11 |
| 68:17 74:9 | mason 22:1 | mendelson | 60:22 61:6 |
| 75:9,12 76:13 | masumoto | 24:16 | minor 74:23,24 |
| 80:20,23 | 11:9 | mengden 18:23 | minute 78:2 |
| makes 36:7 | material 30:3 | merge 54:5 | 79:11 |
| 49:20 | matter 1:6 | merits 43:6 | minutes 79:21 |
| making 42:1 | 29:13 54:3 | 74:13 | 81:25 |
| malkin 18:10 | 80:13 | met 36:16 73:3 | mira 13:25 |
| | | | |
| L | l . | ral Calutions | |

| misrepresent | motion's 78:4 | nelly 11:17 | noncontract |
|----------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|------------------------|
| 63:16 70:2 | move 40:8 | network 1:8,15 | 65:12 |
| missed 72:10 | 50:18 | 1:23 2:6,14 5:4 | normal 71:14 |
| mistakenly | movement | 7:5 8:6,10,15 | north 7:20 |
| 50:3 | 34:9 | 8:20 9:2 | northeast |
| mitchell 16:22 | movements | never 75:12,16 | 42:25 |
| 18:23 | 43:11 | new 1:2 2:19 | note 51:16 59:4 |
| model 28:7 | moving 46:24 | 10:16 11:5,15 | noted 45:1 |
| 30:5 31:12 | 68:9 | 12:5,13,20 | 72:14 |
| moment 27:3,6 | mulvaney 16:2 | 14:5 16:3,5,20 | notes 31:16 |
| monday 39:18 | n | 17:5,13,20 | 60:11,14,16 |
| 39:20,21,23 | n 10:1,5 27:1 | 18:13,20 19:5 | notice 39:3,4 |
| 40:25 76:22 | 83:1 84:1 | 19:12 20:5 | 63:23,25 |
| mondays 40:17 | naftalis 17:2 | 36:3 76:22 | notified 52:6 |
| money 42:20 | nagi 13:8 | 77:18 | novawulf |
| 42:20,21 45:12 | name 81:19 | newco 31:7 | 18:18 |
| 46:2 64:14 | nearing 65:6 | 36:1 | november 4:5 |
| 73:5 | necessarily | newco's 30:5 | 4:15,20 5:5,12 |
| months 51:22 | 40:18 | newport 42:25 | 6:5 7:5,14 77:4 |
| morgan 10:10 | necessary | news 27:10 | 78:13 |
| morning 27:4 | 42:15 | 32:20 35:2 | noyes 14:11 |
| 27:8 39:20,21 | necessity 46:23 | nice 58:15,17 | number 55:20 |
| 40:7 41:11 | need 30:9 39:3 | 60:8 63:6 | 80:15 |
| 43:15 44:22 | 39:4,19 63:20 | nicholas 21:2 | numbers 66:17 |
| 45:7 55:9 | 66:17 67:14 | nicole 16:7 | 74:7 |
| 60:10 70:22 | 77:9,9,11 | night 27:16 | nuraldeen |
| 71:6,7 80:9 | 81:14 | 40:19 43:9 | 23:15 |
| morris 15:23 | needing 48:18 | 62:20 | ny 2:19 10:16 |
| motion 8:2,11 | negisa 23:9 | nikhil 26:8 | 11:5,15 12:5 |
| 8:16 9:3,6,11 | neglect 72:15 | nikolas 21:8 | 12:13,20 14:5 |
| 31:24 43:16 | negotiated | nine 40:21 | 16:5,20 17:5 |
| 45:11 47:14 | 53:9 75:25 | noah 26:5 | 17:13,20 18:13 |
| 48:14 49:4,5,8 | negotiating | non 59:9 63:16 | 18:20 19:5,12 |
| 49:10 50:18 | 72:19 | 65:24 | 20:5 84:23 |
| 59:13 62:12,14 | negotiations | nonconsensual | |
| 66:14 72:12 | 48:13 | 61:24 62:4 | |
| 80:18 | 10.15 | | |
| | | | |

[o - part] Page 21

| 0 | offer 56:14 | open 62:8 70:3 | outside 27:10 |
|------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------|--------------------------------|
| | 62:8 70:1,3,5 | opening 50:24 | 35:3 |
| o 3:1 27:1 84:1 | offered 50:7 | operations | overruled |
| o'brien 12:23 | offering 33:20 | 37:1 | 46:16,19 |
| 21:22 | offerings 36:1 | opine 43:7 | overrules |
| o'clock 39:22 | office 15:2,9 | opinion 47:21 | 62:12 |
| 39:24 40:6 | 17:9 | 59:15 62:13 | overstaffing |
| oar 77:6 | officer 36:12 | opportunity | 75:3 |
| object 49:16 | 37:4 | 63:21 | owens 21:24 |
| objectants | official 4:4,14 | opposition | own 56:10 |
| 17:11 | 5:3,11 6:19 7:4 | 58:12 | 65:14 |
| objected 49:7 | 12:18 13:12,21 | opt 65:13,17 | owns 54:14 |
| objecting 46:4 | 14:3,16 41:12 | 65:17 67:6,8 | р |
| 46:11 50:6,10 | 62:23 | 67:14,19,19,23 | _ |
| objection 31:25 44:22 | offit 13:2 | 70:5,12 | p 10:1,1 13:17 |
| | oh 27:12 74:1 | optimistic | 24:2 26:1 27:1 |
| 45:8 46:8,12 | okay 27:6 | 38:14 | p.m. 39:19 |
| 46:15,19 49:6 | 29:16 32:20 | order 9:6,11 | p.o. 15:20 18:5 |
| 49:14 56:3,5 | 34:21 37:7,21 | 29:2 37:6 44:8 | packed 79:18 |
| 57:19,23 58:6 58:18 | 38:24 39:14,16 | 47:11 49:13 | page 83:4 |
| objections 39:3 | 41:3,7 43:6,13 | 52:22,22 53:9 | pagnanelli |
| 39:5 44:23,24 | 44:17 46:19 | 53:11 56:20 | 24:10 |
| 45:2 49:9 | 55:6 57:4,7,16 | 59:23 62:13 | paid 44:8,12 46:3 |
| 50:20 57:11 | 59:19 60:6 | 63:18,24 64:1 | |
| 62:12 | 61:20 64:1 | 65:21 80:6 | palatable 45:11 |
| objectors | 68:10 69:3 | orderly 81:3 | |
| 57:12 | 78:1 80:7,16 | orders 29:1,2,5 | palissery 22:1 pan 24:9 |
| observation | 80:22 81:11,19 | 29:12 | _ |
| 75:12 | 81:24 | original 45:8 | panel 43:1,2,13 paper 45:24 |
| obviously 35:1 | old 84:21 | originally | paper 45.24 parent 59:11 |
| 37:7,17 39:6 | omnibus 80:21 | 75:25 | 61:2,10,12 |
| 43:8 55:16,23 | 80:24 | osborne 24:19 | park 16:19 |
| 56:9 73:22 | once 37:13,22 | oswald 21:23 | 17:19 |
| occurred 74:9 | ongoing 36:18 | outcome 41:18 | parrots 75:5 |
| octave 25:21 | 37:5 52:9 | outlined 69:1 | part 51:7 55:19 |
| october 39:18 | 76:21 77:13 | outs 67:8,19,19 | 67:5 69:12 |
| 39:18,22 | | | 78:8 |
| 27.10,22 | Veriteyt I e | | 70.0 |

| | • | | C |
|------------------------|------------------------|---------------------|------------------------|
| participate | peled 12:15 | philippe 21:16 | pllc 6:17 12:17 |
| 49:17 | penalties 28:16 | phillips 25:25 | po 15:4 |
| particular | 28:24 | phone 60:17 | pockets 64:14 |
| 31:18 52:25 | pending 48:22 | phones 60:19 | point 32:15 |
| 58:23 69:4 | 53:10 | phung 22:4 | 38:7 66:25 |
| 75:15 | people 43:13 | pick 56:17 | 67:24 69:2,6 |
| parties 27:14 | 56:15 63:12 | picture 39:9 | 80:17 |
| 30:18 41:2 | 66:7 67:13 | piece 74:22 | pointed 46:4 |
| 44:3 45:21 | 76:2 | pillay 6:1 43:2 | pollack 67:6,8 |
| 48:17,24 51:21 | perella 7:1,6 | 75:24 | pollard 22:5 |
| 55:24 57:16 | performed | pillay's 74:3 | pool 28:25 |
| 58:9 71:14 | 45:17 | piper 19:16 | porczek 22:6 |
| 80:2 81:7 | performing | plain 53:16 | position 36:9 |
| partners 4:2 | 47:1 | plaintiffs 1:13 | 45:1 46:15,22 |
| 5:15 7:2,6 | period 4:4,9,15 | 1:21 2:4,12 | 48:9 |
| 16:10,11 55:10 | 4:20,22 5:5,16 | 18:11 79:24 | positive 81:8 |
| party 19:3 46:3 | 5:21 6:4,6,11 | plan 9:13 | possession |
| 50:6,10 | 6:13,19 7:5,7 | 28:12 31:7 | 7:12 |
| party's 49:7 | 7:14,16,21 | 32:21 33:13,19 | possible 28:14 |
| passed 44:22 | 34:9 39:13 | 34:25 36:3,5 | 39:2,16 40:8 |
| 49:7 | 56:11 74:19 | 42:14 43:17 | 42:17 46:25 |
| past 40:14 | 78:13,14 | 46:20 47:1,7 | 56:14 68:9 |
| patel 20:13 | perry 13:9 | 50:14 61:13 | 69:23 81:4 |
| patton 22:2 | perspective | 63:21 65:22 | potential 37:9 |
| patzak 22:3 | 49:19,23 70:6 | 66:11 67:1,5 | 39:9,14,18 |
| paul 18:17 | pertaining | 68:17 69:9 | 47:22 51:20 |
| 19:7 20:15 | 52:12 | 83:5 | 52:13 64:16 |
| 23:14 | pesce 13:18 | platform 48:22 | 67:15 |
| pause 31:12 | peter 20:14 | 59:1 | potentially |
| pave 38:16 | 22:3 | plaza 17:19 | 35:4 |
| pavon 36:11,17 | petition 31:6 | 18:12 | powerpoint |
| 36:24 | 34:4 | pleading 70:6 | 43:11 |
| pay 33:19 | pham 23:5 | please 27:2 | poynter 21:25 |
| 43:16,22 56:9 | phan 24:18 | 58:12 74:2 | practical 64:24 |
| paying 49:23 | phenomenal | 81:11 | practice 55:19 |
| payment 51:14 | 74:22 | pleased 28:10 | practices 28:7 |
| | | | 31:5,8 36:2 |
| | | | |

| (7.3 | • •1 1 | 22.16 | 20.2 |
|---------------------|------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|
| practicing 67:3 | privileged | program 32:16 | pryor 20:2 |
| precedent 42:7 | 51:24 | 42:25 | public 37:23 |
| prediction | priya 21:3 | prologue 40:14 | publicly 29:18 |
| 63:4 | pro 31:23 | promise 62:25 | 29:20,23 52:1 |
| preferred 9:8 | 34:13 58:14 | promises 40:7 | pundisto 22:7 |
| 11:13 40:18,20 | 60:11 76:3 | promptly 52:7 | purposes 32:21 |
| 51:12,19,20 | probably | proof 63:14,15 | 77:2 |
| 52:7 55:7 | 27:13 44:2 | 63:18 68:17 | pursuant |
| 56:24 | 49:11 50:2 | 69:3 72:4,13 | 32:25 33:1 |
| premature | problem 30:2 | 72:17 73:2,13 | 44:1 62:10 |
| 32:3 | 50:5 69:19 | proofs 72:3 | pursue 52:7 |
| prematurely | procedural | proposal 47:8 | 65:14 |
| 77:8 | 29:13 | propose 33:13 | pursuing 73:12 |
| prepetition | procedure 67:6 | proposed 33:5 | put 32:2 35:2 |
| 63:11 | proceed 48:18 | 33:9 34:24 | 38:1 43:3,10 |
| present 20:9 | proceeding 8:5 | 45:10 47:14 | 45:24 68:20,21 |
| presentation | 8:9,14,19 9:1 | 49:13,25 52:22 | putting 42:20 |
| 50:25 | 44:19 69:12 | 61:13 63:25 | q |
| preserved 59:1 | proceedings | 65:25 68:5 | quality 77:12 |
| 73:22 | 82:1 84:4 | 80:5 | quanty 77.12 quantum 56:8 |
| preserves 59:2 | proceeds 50:9 | proposing | question 31:18 |
| presided 67:7 | 64:19 | 34:15 | 32:19 40:4 |
| press 74:18 | process 28:21 | prospects 81:4 | 45:20,23,25 |
| pretrial 40:7 | 36:18,24 41:20 | protracted | questioning |
| pretty 67:20 | 52:14 65:19 | 47:17 50:16 | 75:19 |
| 77:3 | 66:17 67:1 | prove 64:9 | questions 30:1 |
| preview 66:19 | 68:25 69:9,21 | 65:20 70:7 | 31:12 33:17 |
| price 18:10 | 70:1 71:15 | provide 38:4 | 42:3 45:15 |
| 33:20 34:3 | produced 52:3 | 43:21 53:6 | |
| 43:11 | professional | 65:7,10,15 | 58:3,5 71:3,18 |
| principal 28:3 | 4:7,8,22 5:8,14 | provided 28:8 | quick 68:9 |
| principle 69:25 | 5:16,19,20 6:3 | 52:18 74:14 | quicker 42:21 |
| 80:22 | 6:16 7:7,20,21 | provides 48:20 | quickly 41:24 |
| prior 36:24 | 44:1 78:12 | 54:12 | 79:19 81:4 |
| 48:21 64:25 | professionals | proving 70:8 | quite 27:10 |
| 72:4 | 71:16 74:11,12 | provision 53:5 | 37:10 45:14 |
| | , – | • | 67:12 |
| | | | |

[r - reports] Page 24

| | reasonableness | 79:1 | release 48:23 |
|---------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| r | 51:10 52:21 | reed 17:17 | 51:14 73:16,19 |
| r 3:1 10:1 12:7 | 73:3 | referred 50:3 | released 37:20 |
| 27:1 84:1 | reasonably | 68:16 | releases 50:9 |
| raise 78:25 | 32:12 46:24 | referring 75:14 | 52:13 61:24,25 |
| raised 68:2 | reasons 51:6 | regard 53:11 | 62:4 |
| 69:11 76:6 | 69:13 | 76:23 | relevant 36:6 |
| rakesh 20:13 | rebecca 25:7 | regarding 8:2 | 52:12 |
| ramifications | receive 45:16 | 53:12 71:4 | relied 58:24,25 |
| 67:15 | 50:8 64:22 | 80:16 | relief 9:9,13 |
| ran 48:2 | 65:18,21 | regina 24:19 | 49:8 |
| rapidly 46:24 | received 49:9 | regulators | reluctant 47:4 |
| rasile 19:21 | recognize | 28:14 31:4,10 | remaining |
| rates 74:25 | 32:18 | 37:8,9,12,15 | 49:13,14 |
| 75:1 | | 37:18 38:7,9 | remains 36:18 |
| rather 77:8,13 | recognized 53:2 | 38:15,17 75:17 | remains 30.18 remove 44:4,5 |
| reach 28:10 | recommenda | regulatory | rendered 4:2 |
| 33:11 38:15 | 78:23 | | |
| reached 28:23 | recommenda | 27:22 76:18,18 77:6 | 4:13 5:2,10 6:3 6:18 7:2,13 |
| 48:14 51:21 | 71:1 76:3 79:4 | rehash 51:15 | · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · · |
| 52:10 55:25 | | | reopened 45:20 |
| reaching 57:16 | recommends 78:16 | reilly 22:8 reimbursed | repeat 42:2 |
| read 34:23 | record 43:14 | 56:13 | 43:18 62:6 |
| 42:5,6 74:20 | 52:3 84:4 | reimbursement | replies 44:10 |
| 74:21 76:8 | records 76:25 | 4:3,13 5:2,10 | 44:11 |
| reading 43:9 | 77:13 | 6:3,10,18 7:3 | |
| ready 37:24 | recover 47:16 | 7:13 44:7,8 | reply 49:11 50:2 |
| 40:15 67:11 | 48:11 54:6,24 | 45:16 | report 34:6,7 |
| real 63:11 | recoveries | relate 31:4 | 43:4 52:3 70:8 |
| reality 64:24 | | related 9:9,13 | 70:25 71:4 |
| realize 58:9 | 28:17 30:13,13 41:24 65:1 | 62:18 | |
| really 27:12 | | | 74:20 76:13 |
| 77:5 78:19 | recovery 65:10 | relating 31:11 | 78:15,22 79:1 |
| 79:11 81:10 | 67:22 70:4 | relationship | 79:4,6,7 81:8 |
| reason 57:19 | 73:8 | 72:5 | reports 74:13 |
| reasonable | reding 26:1 reductions | relationships 72:6 | 74:20,20,21 |
| 40:23 62:9 | | /2.0 | 75:11,21,21 |
| | 71:2 78:17 | | 76:8,9 |
| L | 1 | 1 | |

| represent | resolves 48:17 | rhode 42:25 | role 27:24 |
|-----------------|----------------|---------------------|-----------------------------|
| 51:17 | 53:10 54:10 | rich 47:3 67:20 | 51:17 73:1 |
| representatives | resolving 64:6 | richard 21:23 | roni 36:11 |
| 68:16 69:15 | respect 32:10 | 25:25 | rosella 26:2 |
| represented | 33:3 36:25 | rickie 23:17 | ross 10:11 |
| 50:1 56:6 67:9 | 46:17 56:3 | rifkind 18:17 | rudolph 14:20 |
| 72:16 | 64:4 68:1,2,5 | right 29:4 | rule 51:10 52:8 |
| represents | respectfully | 32:21 33:21 | 62:10 66:24 |
| 55:12 | 52:21 | 34:8,21 39:15 | ruled 59:16,18 |
| request 52:21 | response 40:1 | 39:17 40:2 | rules 30:22 |
| 73:9 | 61:21 | 41:7,8 50:20 | 71:11 |
| require 30:6 | responses | 50:22 55:7 | ruling 35:4 |
| 31:10 32:1 | 46:13 | 57:10 58:2,11 | 53:24 66:24 |
| 57:25 | responsibility | 59:22 62:11 | rulings 83:3 |
| required 63:24 | 78:9 | 67:14 68:10 | ryan 15:14 |
| 74:19 | result 28:9,23 | 69:1 73:25 | 20:21 24:18 |
| resenblum | 34:4 53:17 | 75:9 77:21 | S |
| 12:8 | 54:20 55:3 | 78:1 81:17 | s 10:1 11:9 |
| reserve 67:14 | 65:11 73:10 | rights 38:12 | 27:1 |
| reside 59:15 | resulted 47:20 | 50:10,13 58:1 | sabatino 21:2 |
| resign 28:1,2 | 71:14 | 62:7 | sabin 68:14,15 |
| resolution | retain 50:10 | riki 21:14 | 69:17 |
| 31:19 33:12 | 62:7 | ripple 31:16 | saccullo 6:9,13 |
| 42:19 48:23 | retained 44:1 | 34:22 42:4,6,9 | saihgal 21:3 |
| 55:25 65:24 | retention | rise 68:17 | saligar 21.3 |
| resolutions | 43:23,24 | risk 48:10 | sales 35:13 |
| 28:10 | return 41:20 | risky 50:16 | salle 10:5 |
| resolve 29:3 | revenue 36:12 | road 84:21 | salls 21:4 |
| 42:15 49:12,23 | reviewed 78:19 | roadblocks | samuel 13:17 |
| 58:18 60:2 | 78:20 | 43:24 | sandali 25:5 |
| 64:18,25 65:19 | reviewing 52:1 | robert 20:12 | santos 25:19 |
| 66:7 71:15 | 76:12 78:7 | 23:18 | santos 23.19 sarah 22:10 |
| 72:23 81:11 | reviews 45:12 | robinson 14:12 | satisfactory |
| resolved 42:14 | revised 43:16 | rockefeller | 68:3 |
| 53:14 59:20 | 44:4 49:12 | 18:12 | satisfied 61:15 |
| 69:8,12 | 73:15 | rodriguez 21:9 | 79:1 |
| | | | 17.1 |
| | | | |

[satisfies - shoes] Page 26

| satisfies 51:9 | sec 15:10 27:21 | seize 28:15 | settle 34:15 |
|--------------------|---------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 52:20 | 28:10 29:1,5 | selendy 6:17 | settled 55:21 |
| satterfield 26:3 | 29:10 31:19,20 | 12:17 51:5 | settlement 9:7 |
| saturday 43:1 | 32:4 | senes 21:7 | 32:4 33:6,7,14 |
| saved 49:20 | second 4:1,7 | sense 38:10 | 47:14 48:13,14 |
| saw 49:11 50:2 | 4:18 5:1,8,14 | 40:9 49:20 | 48:15,20 49:2 |
| 59:13 64:10 | 6:1 7:1,10,19 | 51:25 66:21 | 49:8,10,15,19 |
| 71:13 | 8:17 77:1 | 70:11 | 49:22 50:7,8 |
| saxena 21:5 | 78:14,15 | separate 27:21 | 50:14,18 51:7 |
| saying 46:11 | section 32:25 | 69:11 72:2 | 51:8,21 52:10 |
| sc 18:2 | 33:2 35:6 44:1 | september | 52:14,19,20,22 |
| schedule 56:18 | securities 16:3 | 39:19 40:25 | 53:9 54:10 |
| 66:22 79:25,25 | 27:20 31:22 | 80:4,19,21 | 55:17 57:6,10 |
| 80:1 | 32:5,13 36:1 | serban 21:19 | 57:17 59:2 |
| scheduled 48:3 | security 31:21 | series 9:8 | 61:3,23 62:7,9 |
| 48:4 66:16 | 32:1,17,22,23 | 11:13 33:16 | 62:19 65:7,7 |
| 76:22 | 33:8,17 35:13 | 44:15,17 47:14 | 65:17,18,25 |
| scheduling | 35:14 60:11,15 | 47:15,18 48:10 | 67:5,20,20 |
| 64:11 80:3,6 | see 33:11,22 | 48:15,16,24 | 68:5 81:4 83:7 |
| 80:16 | 37:25 44:25 | 49:15,25 50:7 | settlements |
| schickler 23:6 | 58:15,17,21 | 50:25 51:7,12 | 37:19 |
| schneider 26:4 | 60:9 67:24 | 51:19 52:6 | settles 51:11 |
| schottenstein | 78:3 81:6 | 54:11 55:11 | severson 21:8 |
| 26:5 | seeing 37:18 | 56:24 62:1,18 | shane 21:24 |
| schroeder 26:6 | seek 43:23 | 62:19 72:20 | shanks 2:3,11 |
| scope 75:25 | 48:14 62:2 | 83:7 | 8:14,19 9:1 |
| 76:6,7 | seeking 44:6 | seriously 78:9 | 24:6 80:11,12 |
| scott 14:10 | 66:12 72:12 | served 41:19 | shara 11:7 |
| screen 43:11 | 73:11 | services 4:2,13 | 45:4 |
| 55:14 | seeks 51:12 | 4:19,21 5:2,10 | share 50:8 |
| scrutiny 76:11 | seem 47:1 | 6:3,10,17 7:2 | sharon 25:15 |
| se 31:23 58:14 | seemed 37:16 | 7:13 43:21 | shikhar 21:5 |
| 60:11 76:3 | 37:22 80:16 | 44:5 47:2 | shirley 23:16 |
| sean 21:17 | seen 30:11 | set 34:5 63:24 | shlivko 21:1 |
| searcy 21:6 | 66:13 | 79:5,19 | shoba 6:1 43:1 |
| seated 27:2 | segregated 48:22 | setting 64:1 | shoes 68:6 |
| | | | |

| short 37:6 | somebody 36:7 | specific 64:9 | starting 39:19 |
|---------------------|---------------------|-------------------|------------------------|
| 74:19 | somewhat 47:7 | specifically | 40:25 |
| shortly 68:25 | sontchi 18:3 | 28:25 41:17 | state 15:10 |
| show 47:6 | 70:19,24 71:3 | 45:15 71:17 | 37:9,11 38:7 |
| 63:10 | 71:4,5,6,8,8,23 | specifics 51:23 | 38:17 75:17 |
| showed 34:8 | 71:25 73:18 | speedy 70:10 | statement 30:7 |
| shows 79:7 | 74:1 76:17 | spending 42:20 | 33:23 34:12 |
| sid 24:9 | 77:20,22,24 | spent 73:6 | 37:13 38:21 |
| sign 49:15 50:8 | 78:1,3 79:13 | 74:10,17 78:20 | 39:4,6,11 |
| signature 84:7 | sonya 9:25 | spoke 42:25 | 62:25 65:1 |
| signed 29:12 | 84:3,8 | spoken 80:11 | 66:14 67:1 |
| 29:15 | soon 29:18 | sponsor 9:13 | 68:8 |
| significant | 69:12,23 81:5 | 43:17 46:21 | states 1:1 2:17 |
| 36:25 52:20 | sorry 44:17 | 47:8 | 11:2 45:5 |
| 55:13,21 64:10 | 60:14 69:18 | spread 66:23 | status 8:1,7,11 |
| 74:24 | 74:1 | spring 30:20 | 8:16,21 54:2 |
| significantly | sort 53:16 | sprofera 20:14 | 62:17 72:24 |
| 65:2 | 62:18 71:11 | square 20:4 | 79:19 |
| silverman 20:7 | 73:19 75:1,3 | ssb 15:3 | stay 59:14,14 |
| similar 38:17 | 77:5 78:11 | stadler 18:8 | 79:11 |
| simon 24:3 | sorts 80:4 | staffing 74:25 | steadman 26:7 |
| simply 57:20 | sought 47:18 | stakeholders | steffan 23:24 |
| sits 59:11 61:2 | 47:22 73:1 | 48:6 | stem 62:18 |
| six 73:7 | sound 57:16 | staking 36:4 | step 68:5 |
| sixteenth 39:23 | source 58:6 | stalking 45:14 | steps 42:1 |
| slightly 45:11 | south 13:13,22 | stances 58:1 | steve 23:1 |
| slippery 45:17 | 19:18 | standard 33:14 | stig 22:15 |
| slope 45:17 | southern 1:2 | 70:6 73:3 | stipulate 32:9 |
| slow 68:7 | spangler 10:9 | standpoint | stipulated 29:2 |
| smith 20:25 | spawned 47:21 | 51:8 | 32:6 78:17 |
| smoother | speak 57:9 | stands 46:8,16 | stop 40:21 |
| 71:14 | 60:13 | start 39:19,22 | storvick 20:15 |
| social 30:12 | special 6:6,11 | 39:24 40:6,17 | story 67:18 |
| solicit 63:20 | 7:11,16 16:18 | 40:20 63:8 | stout 20:16 |
| solutions 84:20 | 27:25 28:3 | 67:12 | straightforw |
| soma 23:12 | 36:15,23 76:18 | started 47:17 | 51:9 |
| | | | |
| | | | |

[strauss - think] Page 28

| . = = | 50.05.55 | | |
|---------------------|-----------------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| strauss 7:11,15 | 72:25 77:1 | sustained | termination |
| 16:17 | substantively | 46:17 | 36:16,18 |
| street 10:5 | 49:4,6 59:12 | sw 16:12 | terms 51:8,15 |
| 11:4 12:4,12 | 60:5 69:4,10 | systems 36:22 | 65:2,7 68:16 |
| 13:4,13 15:11 | sued 50:11 | t | 68:20 69:14 |
| 16:4 18:4 | suggesting | t 23:16 84:1,1 | test 31:22 |
| structure 47:7 | 37:22 81:1 | table 44:4 | tether 17:3 |
| 60:25 61:17 | suite 13:4,13 | tail 67:23 | texas 15:2,3,9 |
| struggling | 13:22 14:17 | taji 20:18 | thank 41:10 |
| 69:21 | 16:12 18:4 | taji 20:16 tak 20:24 | 45:4,6,21 |
| stuff 75:1 | 19:11,18 84:22 | take 41:4 58:1 | 47:10,13 51:3 |
| sub 52:6 | sullivan 20:17 | 64:7,10 70:3 | 55:6,6 57:7,8 |
| subject 32:23 | summary | 78:9 | 57:14 58:11 |
| 32:24 33:1,8 | 70:25 71:4 | taken 46:22 | 60:6,7 61:19 |
| 33:24 34:1 | superlatives | 60:11,14,16 | 61:22 62:16,22 |
| 52:13 71:2 | 68:19 | 72:18 | 68:1,4,10,12 |
| submit 47:10 | support 47:2 | talk 72:21 74:8 | 69:16,17 70:14 |
| 50:14 | 50:17 55:16 | talked 74:8 | 70:15 77:19,24 |
| subordinated | 68:21 | talking 65:5 | 79:15 80:7 |
| 33:18 | supported | 73:5 74:11 | 81:12,13,15,23 |
| subordination | 52:15 | tammy 22:23 | thing 36:10 |
| 32:2,24 33:1,8 | sure 27:17 | tanniy 22.23 tanzila 10:19 | 61:6 |
| 33:24 34:1,18 | 30:17 39:14 | taylor 22:18 | things 43:9 |
| 35:5,24 36:6 | 56:13 60:23 | teach 39:20 | 58:22 66:5 |
| subsidiaries | 71:23 74:9 | technical 76:24 | 72:14 77:9 |
| 61:4 | 80:20,23 | telephonically | 80:5 |
| subsidiary | suri 26:8 | 57:15 | think 28:11 |
| 54:23 | surprise 41:22 | tell 64:3 67:18 | 29:11 30:6 |
| substance 52:2 | surprises | 74:15 80:23 | 32:3,11,18 |
| substantial | 37:13 | temidayo | 33:5,15 34:19 |
| 53:22 54:7,8 | susan 17:9,15 | 12:22 51:4 | 35:3,16,20,24 |
| 54:25 73:9 | 57:13 | 81:20 | 35:25 36:5 |
| substantive | suspended | term 53:9 | 37:12,12,25 |
| 49:3 50:12 | 30:11,15,18,20 | term 33:9 terminated | 41:22,25 42:9 |
| 51:12 53:1,6 | 31:1 | 28:2 36:20 | 42:11,15,16,22 |
| 53:17 54:4,20 | suspense 62:14 | | 43:24 44:13 |
| 55:2 59:8 60:2 | | 37:6 | 47:5 53:14 |
| | | | |

[think - under] Page 29

| | | I | |
|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 54:2 55:21 | timeline 30:5 | transcribed | two 39:9,12,17 |
| 56:1,6,7 58:23 | timely 72:17 | 9:25 | 39:22,24,25 |
| 58:24 63:8 | times 20:4 | transcript 84:4 | 40:13,14 42:22 |
| 64:10 66:19,22 | 78:24 | travel 80:4 | 47:24 54:5 |
| 67:21 69:6 | timing 68:22 | travis 21:11 | 61:9 62:13 |
| 70:10 72:22 | timothy 22:8 | tremendous | 73:6 74:19 |
| 75:10,15,17,20 | tipton 20:19 | 49:21 | 75:11,13 76:9 |
| 75:24 76:2,4,5 | today 42:23 | trial 40:8 47:20 | 76:24 77:8 |
| 76:8,9 78:9,22 | 70:24 73:11 | 48:3 67:11,13 | 78:18 79:9 |
| 78:24 79:2,22 | 78:12 | trials 64:11 | twofold 64:15 |
| 80:6,21 | todd 12:7 | tried 28:15 | tx 15:5,10,10 |
| third 17:12 | together 43:13 | 80:23 | 15:12 |
| thomas 14:9 | token 31:20,24 | trigger 80:17 | typical 75:1 |
| 20:3 22:25 | 31:25 32:13 | tristan 25:16 | typically 40:23 |
| thomson 26:9 | 33:6,11,17 | true 63:3 84:4 | u |
| thought 32:3 | 35:4,5,24 36:7 | trust 17:10,18 | u.s. 3:3 11:3 |
| 76:5 79:10 | 43:11 | 57:14 | 45:1 46:22 |
| thousands 28:8 | tokens 33:4 | trustee 11:3 | 76:1 |
| three 39:24 | tomas 21:13 | 45:1,5 46:22 | ubierna 26:10 |
| 55:22 68:16 | ton 73:5 | 76:1 | uday 22:22 |
| threshold | tony 26:12 | try 72:23 79:19 | ultimately |
| 51:10 52:20 | took 34:8 | 79:24 | 52:17 60:3 |
| tiger 67:23 | 52:17 74:3 | trying 56:12 | 72:13 |
| time 36:13 | 75:2 76:11 | 66:7 81:3 | unable 47:8 |
| 37:10 39:12,24 | 77:2,11 | tuesday 67:13 | uncontested |
| 40:23,24 46:21 | topics 27:15 | tuganov 12:11 | 44:21 |
| 50:19 52:12 | torres 20:20 | 68:15 | under 28:22 |
| 58:3 64:7,12 | total 56:25 | turetsky 14:7 | 31:7,22 33:8 |
| 65:23 66:4 | totaling 63:14 | turn 44:25 | 33:13,13,18,25 |
| 68:20 69:22 | totally 28:14 | 51:1 | 34:1 35:6 36:6 |
| 70:9 74:11,19 | 30:8 | turned 28:7 | 36:19 50:13 |
| 76:5,24 77:12 | touch 38:25 | 78:11 | 51:10 52:8 |
| 78:21 | toward 46:24 | turning 38:19 | 53:24 61:8,9 |
| timeframe | towards 48:18 | 43:15 | 61:10,10,12 |
| 75:6 76:10 | transactions | tv 55:14 | 62:19 65:22 |
| 77:5 | 34:9 35:14 | twenty 39:24 | 77:10 |
| | | | / / • 1 U |
| | | rol Colutions | |

| underneath | unsuspended | victims 28:21 | 51:2 55:7,8 |
|------------------------|------------------------|----------------------|----------------|
| 61:2 | 30:19 | 28:22 38:10 | 56:9,14,17 |
| understand | untimely 46:19 | 41:25 | 57:4,9,12 |
| 30:16,16,18 | unusual 45:9 | victor 26:10 | 61:20 63:7 |
| 46:14 53:13 | update 69:14 | video 55:15 | 66:5 68:8,13 |
| 57:17 67:14 | urge 56:1 57:5 | view 28:20 | 69:2,20,22 |
| 71:24 76:25 | urged 38:8,9 | 46:23 75:22 | 70:11,12 71:5 |
| understanding | urging 37:10 | 78:11 79:3 | 76:12,15 77:25 |
| 60:24 61:16 | use 63:21 | viewed 73:1 | 78:25 80:7,11 |
| 77:10 | useful 37:2 | views 42:3 | wanted 36:10 |
| understood | using 8:1 41:20 | vince 20:17 | 38:18 50:8 |
| 74:9 | 74:25 | virtually 45:6 | 58:20,21 59:7 |
| unfortunate | usually 40:20 | virtue 61:5 | 63:21 66:19 |
| 66:25 | 40:21 | vivid 67:2 | 69:14 74:2,9 |
| unfortunately | V | vollenhals | 80:19 81:2 |
| 80:24 | v 1:14,22 2:5 | 20:21 | wants 53:14 |
| unique 75:4,5 | 2:13 8:6,10,14 | voluminous | 56:4 |
| united 1:1 2:17 | 8:19 9:1 19:21 | 52:3 | warren 20:23 |
| 11:2 45:5 | valid 64:22 | vote 66:13,15 | watkins 76:16 |
| universally | valuation 34:2 | voted 52:18 | 76:18 |
| 74:15 | value 31:24 | votes 66:18 | way 28:22 |
| universe 74:15 | 52:14 54:17,19 | voting 66:10 | 30:19 35:5 |
| unnecessary | 55:1,5 61:4,6 | voyager 37:15 | 38:8,15,17 |
| 37:13 45:12 | 66:2 75:16 | 40:13 47:6 | 49:2 65:6 |
| 79:12 | varick 11:4 | 71:18,21,25 | 66:11,13 70:11 |
| unregistered | variety 31:11 | 72:1,3,12,16 | 74:7 |
| 32:5,16,22 | 47:21 | 72:20,21 | we've 28:23,25 |
| unresolved | various 71:2 | W | 29:1 30:11 |
| 69:7 | vazquez 26:11 | w 15:11 20:7 | 31:9 33:5,9,10 |
| unsealed 36:14 | vejseli 26:12 | wacker 14:17 | 34:15 38:8 |
| unsecured 4:4 | venable 12:10 | wait 42:10 | 56:5 64:6 |
| 4:15 5:4,11 | 68:15 | 78:3 | 68:18 69:11,21 |
| 6:19 7:4 12:18 | verbal 46:19 | waiting 59:8 | 69:24 |
| 13:12,21 14:3 | veritext 84:20 | walton 20:22 | website 38:2 |
| 14:16 41:13 | vesey 12:4 | want 30:17 | 59:5 |
| 55:4 62:23 | viable 36:8 | 37:12 40:14 | week 27:13,19 |
| | 55.2 - 5 | 41:5 43:6 47:3 | 31:14 38:22 |
| | Veriteyt I ed | | |

[week - zoom] Page 31

| 20.0.12.42.0 | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 39:9,12 43:8 | wishes 65:13 | yesterday |
| 63:1,2,5 68:7 | witness 40:21 | 49:11 50:2 |
| 77:17 80:6 | wofford 14:8 | 60:21 80:15 |
| weekend 63:6 | won 48:5,11 | 81:7 |
| weeks 39:17,25 | wonderful | yeung 20:24 |
| 40:13,14 | 38:6 | yoon 14:13 |
| weil 19:2 | woods 18:15 | york 1:2 2:19 |
| weinberg 7:2,6 | word 30:15 | 10:16 11:5,15 |
| 18:10 | 42:10,11 | 12:5,13,20 |
| weiss 18:17 | work 51:25 | 14:5 16:5,20 |
| welcome 77:20 | 60:12 68:20 | 17:5,13,20 |
| went 44:4 | 71:10 74:3,22 | 18:13,20 19:5 |
| 46:18 79:13 | 75:7 79:13 | 19:12 20:5 |
| west 12:12 | worked 28:19 | 76:23 77:18 |
| 15:19 | working 42:18 | young 4:8 5:20 |
| westcap 58:23 | 65:6 66:8 80:3 | Z |
| westover 11:20 | works 57:21 | zabib 20:10 |
| wharton 18:17 | world 36:14 | zachary 20:10 |
| white 5:9 13:11 | 66:23 74:11 | zaharis 16:24 |
| 13:20 14:2,15 | worries 41:1 | zareh 18:10 |
| white& 41:12 | worth 74:14,16 | zaryn 23:25 |
| wi 15:21 18:6 | X | zero 33:9,19 |
| wiles 72:14 | x 1:5,11,17,19 | 34:15 |
| 73:13 81:6 | 1:25 2:2,8,10 | ziman 18:22 |
| william 26:6 | 2:16 83:1 | zomo 10:19 |
| williams 12:22 | xrp 35:10 | zoom 8:1 71:22 |
| 51:4,4 53:8 | | 20011 0.1 /1.22 |
| 81:18,20,20,23 | y | |
| willis 10:10 | yanez 11:20 | |
| win 48:10 | yards 11:14 | |
| winds 47:8 | yeah 61:17 | |
| wire 27:20 | 71:9,20 77:23 | |
| wisconsin | year 56:11 | |
| 15:16,17 | years 55:19 | |
| wish 51:1 | 69:24 | |
| 56:20 58:12 | yeilding 24:8 | |
| 69:6 | | |
| | | |